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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the attached periodic report covering the period from 21 September to 31 December 1996, which was submitted to him, in accordance with paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of Assembly resolution 51/131 of 13 December 1996, by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

19 February 1997

Sir,

The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories has the honour to transmit to you herewith, in accordance with paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 51/131 of 13 December 1996, a periodic report updating information contained in the twenty-eighth report, which it adopted and presented to you on 20 September 1996 (A/51/99/Add.2). The present periodic report has been prepared in order to bring to your attention, and to the attention of the General Assembly, updated information on the human rights situation in the occupied territories.

The present periodic report covers the period from 21 September to 31 December 1996. It is based on written information gathered from various sources among which the Special Committee has selected relevant excerpts and summaries, which are reflected in the report.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Dato' ABDUL MAJID Mohamed
Chairman a.i. of the Special Committee to
Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the
Human Rights of the Palestinian People and
Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 51/131 of 13 December 1996, the General Assembly:

> "5. Requests the Special Committee, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli lack of compliance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter;
>
> "6. Also requests the Special Committee to submit regularly to the Secretary-General periodic reports on the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem;
>
> "7. Further requests the Special Committee to continue to investigate the treatment of prisoners in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967."

2. The Special Committee continued its work under the rules of procedure contained in its first report to the Secretary-General and held the first of its series of meetings from 17 to 19 February 1997 at Geneva. The first series of meetings was attended by Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal) and Dato' Abdul Majid Mohamed (Malaysia). Since Mr. Herman Leonard de Silva (Sri Lanka, Chairman), was unable to attend, Dato' Abdul Majid Mohamed chaired the meetings.

3. The Special Committee decided to continue its system of monitoring information on the occupied territories and, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 51/131, to pay special attention to information on the treatment of prisoners. The Special Committee examined information appearing in the Israeli press and in the Arab-language newspapers published in the occupied territories on developments that had occurred in the occupied territories between 21 September and 31 December 1996. Other materials related to its mandate were also made available.

4. The Special Committee also decided upon the organization of its work for the year. It agreed to address the Governments of Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic with a view to seeking their cooperation in the implementation of its mandate. The Special Committee also agreed to address the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Finally, the Special Committee decided that at its next series of meetings it would undertake hearings in the area for the purpose of recording relevant information or evidence.

5. On 19 February 1997, the Special Committee addressed a letter to the Secretary-General seeking his intervention in an effort to secure the cooperation of the Government of Israel. The Special Committee also addressed the Government of Israel directly.

6. The Special Committee also examined the present report, which was adopted on 19 February 1997.

7. The geographical names and the terminology employed in the present report reflect the usage in the original sources and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Special Committee or the Secretariat of the United Nations.

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

A. General situation

1. General developments and policy statements

8. On 19 September, the seizure of a house on Nablus road in East Jerusalem by Jewish settlers was seen by the Palestinian population of the city as a prelude to a larger operation aimed at seizing scores of other Arab houses within and outside the Old City walls. According to informed sources, 48 Arab houses had been earmarked for takeover by settlers. The sources indicated that the societies of Ateret Kohanim and El-Ad, whose aim was to increase the Jewish presence in the city, have succeeded in buying the houses in question from their Arab owners. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September)

9. On 23 September, the Israeli authorities opened a new exit to the Hashmonean Tunnel located near the Temple Mount, in defiance of vehement Muslim opposition. The opening took place in secret between 11.30 p.m. and midnight under heavy police guard and sparked off widespread protest by the entire Muslim world and the Palestinian people. During an emergency meeting, the Muslim leaders in Jerusalem charged that the tunnel had damaged Muslim property, including that of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The director of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Sheik Mohammed Hussein, stated that Israel had declared war against the entire Islamic world by opening a new exit to the tunnel, a step which he claimed marked the end of the peace process. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat stated that the opening of the tunnel constituted a crime against the Muslim religion and its holy places and was contrary to the peace process and all that had been agreed upon. Mr. Arafat declared that the Palestinian people would not look on passively as its holy places were being harmed, and he called for a general commercial strike and demonstrations to be staged throughout the territories. The League of Arab States warned that Israel had enraged Muslims worldwide and risked triggering widespread unrest. A statement issued by the secretariat of the League declared that the League would appeal to the United Nations, the co-sponsors of the peace process, and the European Union to try immediately and seriously to persuade Israel to close the tunnel. However, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stood by his decision, stating that the tunnel represented a bedrock of Jewish existence and that he was proud to

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implement the previous Government's decision to open the tunnel, which should have opened before. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 September)

10. On 24 September, violent clashes between Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) troops and Palestinians protesting the opening of the Hashmonean Tunnel broke out throughout the occupied territories. During the ensuing three days, dozens of Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces and hundreds more injured in what was described by the IDF as a war rather than intifada. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25, 26, 27, 28 September)

11. On 24 September, the Palestinian Authority called on the Security Council to discuss the violence which broke out in the territories following the opening of the Hashmonean Tunnel near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. (Jerusalem Post, 26 September)

12. On 24 September, Palestinian protesters, including the mayor of Hebron, Mustapha Natshe, and the Palestinian Authority Minister for Higher Education, Hanan Ashrawi, demonstrated against the new Israeli policy of allowing the Jewish settlers to have a free hand in the city. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September)

13. On 25 September, King Hussein of Jordan denounced the opening of a new exit to the Hashmonean Tunnel, stating that the move was an infringement of the rights of all Arabs and Muslims. A statement by the Government of Jordan also condemned the measure, stating that it undermined the structure of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, changed the features of the holy city and harmed the feelings of Arabs and Muslims. The statement called on Israel to abide by international agreements and urged Arab and Islamic States to work to preserve the holy site and ensure that Al-Aqsa Mosque sustained no damage. The Arab League issued an official statement claiming that Israel's objective in opening the tunnel was to make the Al-Aqsa Mosque collapse so that the Jewish Temple could be rebuilt in its place. According to the League's Under-Secretary for Palestine Affairs, the 450-metre-long tunnel represents the first step in a scheme to demolish the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Answering these accusations, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the tunnel did not pass under the Temple Mount and would not cause it to collapse. The Deputy Religious Affairs Minister announced that the tunnel would be opened to visitors during the Jewish holiday of Succoth and that work on the passageway would continue despite Muslim and Palestinian opposition. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 26 September)

14. On 26 September, the League of Arab States held a special meeting in Cairo at the request of the Palestinians. Following the meeting, it released a statement hailing "the intifada of the Palestinian people, with the participation of its leaders, in intrepidly confronting Israeli repressive practices". The statement, in which the League used the word intifada for the first time in at least three years, indicated that the League considered the latest move to be part of an Israeli and Zionist plot to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque, set up the Temple of Solomon in its place, obliterate Islamic Arab landmarks in Jerusalem and create more facts on the ground which harmed the legal status of Arabs in Jerusalem. The statement charged further that the Government of Israel alone would bear responsibility for the serious consequences which would ensue, and called for an urgent intervention by the

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Security Council and the sponsors of the Middle East peace process to restrain Israel. (Jerusalem Post, 27 September)

15. On 26 September, Israeli Arab leaders called for a general strike of the entire community of 900,000 to protest against the bloodshed in the territories and the Government's policies. The leaders also called for protest marches to be held in towns and villages throughout the country. However, they called on the public to show restraint throughout the general strike and the protest marches. In the past, violence in the territories had spilled over into the streets of the Arab neighbourhoods in Israel and had led to riots. (Jerusalem Post, 27 September)

16. On 26 September, the Palestinian Authority declared a day of national mourning after the killing of 44 Palestinians by the IDF in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. (The Jerusalem Times, 4 October)

17. On 27 September, it was reported that Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat termed the opening of a tunnel bordering the western side of the Al-Aqsa Mosque a breach of the Palestinian-Israeli accords. The tunnel links the Via Dolorosa street in the Muslim Quarter to the Western Wall (the Wailing Wall). The agreements stipulate that no changes would be made in the landscape of the city in East Jerusalem. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September)

18. On 28 September, the spokesman for the Ministry of Religious Affairs stated that all the Succoth events planned by the Ministry for the Western Wall area were to take place as planned, including tours through the Hashmonean Tunnel. (Jerusalem Post, 29 September)

19. On 28 September, in its resolution 1073 (1996), the Security Council called on Israel to revoke immediately all the measures that had caused the situation in the territories to deteriorate. In the preamble to the resolution, which was approved by 14 Council members, with an abstention by the United States of America, the Security Council expressed its concern about the difficulties facing the peace process and the aggravation of the situation in the territories which affected the living conditions of the Palestinian people. (Ha'aretz, 30 September)

20. On 29 September, Palestinian leaders in Jerusalem called for continued demonstrations, but stated that the protests should be peaceful in order to allow for a return to normal life in the city's Arab neighbourhoods. They also called on pupils to return to school and for businesses to reopen. Both Arab schools and businesses had been closed since 23 September as part of a widespread protest against the opening of the Hashmonean Tunnel. (Jerusalem Post, 30 September)

21. On 30 September, it was reported that all joint patrols in the West Bank had been suspended as the IDF continued to deploy more tanks around Palestinian-controlled areas and to increase pressure on the Palestinians to stabilize the situation there. Furthermore, in the third stage of the IDF "Field of Thorns" contingency plan, the army was reportedly prepared to reoccupy Palestinian-controlled areas should the situation there deteriorate. Chief of General Staff, Lt.-Gen. Amnon Shahak stated that he was doubtful whether the situation

that existed prior to the crisis could be restored. This view was expressed by another senior IDF officer, who stated that there had been a total breakdown of confidence in the Palestinian police, who in some cases had reportedly turned their guns on Israeli soldiers with whom they had patrolled only a day before. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 30 September)

22. On 30 September, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and senior IDF officials discussed IDF activities in the territories following numerous violent clashes in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Among the issues discussed were the rules of opening fire. According to the new rules, soldiers serving in the territories were allowed to shoot immediately in order to kill whenever they were fired at. In addition, the rules stated that Palestinians were henceforth prohibited from approaching IDF outposts and that soldiers were authorized to shoot at and kill without hesitation any Palestinian who came within the range of or approached an IDF outpost or soldiers. (Ha'aretz, 1 October)

23. On 30 September, it was reported that according to figures released by the Ministry of Health of the Palestinian Authority, 250 Palestinians who were injured during clashes with IDF troops were still hospitalized in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Among them, 80 were listed as being in serious condition. The director of the Ministry of Health of the Palestinian Authority, Dr. Imad Trawiya, reported that more than 65 Palestinians had been killed and some 1,700 injured since 25 August. According to Dr. Trawiya, most of the casualties had been injured by shots in the head, stomach and chest and that there had been a clear intention to hit the upper part of the body. Dr. Trawiya pointed out that the principal current problem was that soldiers were making it difficult for ambulances to pass into the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. He stated that an ambulance driver was killed and a paramedic and another driver injured by IDF gunfire on 26 September. A total of five ambulances had been hit during the riots. (Ha'aretz, 30 September)

24. On 1 October, an Officer Commanding (OC) IDF combat troops stated that practically all army training and courses had been stopped and that most of the soldiers, cadets and officers had been stationed in the territories. The statement was made when the IDF continued to deploy additional forces in the territories, including armoured personnel carriers and tanks. Snipers from elite commando units are also said to have been dispatched in pairs to military bases in the territories. (Ha'aretz, 2 October)

25. On 1 October, it was reported that according to a report compiled by investigators from the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, the majority of the Palestinians killed or injured in the Gaza Strip during the two days of clashes in September had been hit in the head, neck, chest or stomach, clearly proving that the Israeli forces used their weapons with the aim of killing or inflicting serious injury. The report mentioned the killing of a male nurse, who was shot in the chest while providing assistance to casualties. Another medical worker and an ambulance driver were also hit. According to the report, this proved that shots were fired indiscriminately. It stated further that medical personnel wore special uniforms in order to be easily identifiable. It was observed that shooting at medical personnel constituted a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. In a related development, it was reported that

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409 out of the more than 500 Palestinians who were wounded in clashes in the Gaza Strip remained hospitalized in clinics and hospitals in Rafah. Some casualties were sent home prematurely because of the hospitals' limited capacity and had to return for treatment every day. (Ha'aretz, 1 October)

26. On 2 October, an Israeli army spokesman stated that IDF troops in the occupied territories had been placed on alert in order to counter Palestinian reaction in the wake of the results of the Washington summit. Six cities in the West Bank were cordoned off by tank formations. Tanks were also deployed along the entire length of the Green Line separating Israel from the occupied territories and the self-rule areas. (The Jerusalem Times, 4 October)

27. On 3 October, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai held a special meeting with senior army officers in order to assess the situation in the territories. Three scenarios regarding a renewed conflagration of hostilities were examined at the meeting: shooting incidents and mass demonstrations; demonstrations and strikes without shooting incidents; and demonstrations accompanied by the throwing of stones and incendiary bottles. The IDF was given rules for opening fire corresponding to each case. (Ha'aretz, 4 October)

28. On 4 October, it was reported that Hamas had called on Palestinians to engage in a "total confrontation" with soldiers and settlers. In a statement it released, Hamas labelled the previous week's violence the "Al-Aqsa intifada" and urged that it be continued "as long as the crimes of Judaization and settlements went on". However, on the orders of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, Palestinian police visited schools and universities in the Gaza Strip and warned students to refrain from violent demonstrations. (Jerusalem Post, 4 October)

29. On 4 October, it was reported that the final casualty toll of the September confrontations amounted to 1,200 Palestinians wounded and 70 killed, while 14 Israeli soldiers had been killed and 50 wounded. (The Jerusalem Times, 4 October)

30. On 8 October, the OC Southern Command, General Shlomo Yanai, stated that a total of 35 Palestinians had been killed and more than 500 injured during the violence which erupted in the Gaza Strip some two weeks earlier. Mr. Yanai believed that IDF soldiers had shown great restraint during the confrontations and that the Palestinian death toll could have been much higher. (Ha'aretz, 9 October)

31. On 8 October, the human rights organization B'tselem announced that it had conducted an investigation of the clashes of 28 September at the Temple Mount and found that "policemen had used lethal weapons in situations in which their lives were not threatened". The organization claimed that police had used live ammunition to break up the demonstrations that erupted after Friday prayers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Jerusalem police spokeswoman declined to comment on B'tselem's findings on the grounds that the Justice Ministry's Police Investigations Division was conducting an inquiry into the matter. (Jerusalem Post, 9 October; Ha'aretz, 10 October)

32. On 11 October, it was reported that the human rights organization Al-Haq had stated that 65 Palestinians had been killed in the recent clashes in the West bank and the Gaza Strip. The count included two Palestinians, both from the Gaza Strip, who died of their wounds during the week. In a separate report, the International Society for the Defence of Children indicated that 16 children were among those killed in the clashes. The report added that 1,600 persons had been wounded, 23 of whom, including 5 children, remained in intensive care. (The Jerusalem Times, 11 October)

33. On 16 October, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, warned the United States against extraditing Mussa Abu Marzuk, the head of the Political Bureau of the Movement, to Israel. Hamas warned that the extradition of Abu Marzuk would ignite a new wave of bloody confrontations in the areas. (The Jerusalem Times, 18 October)

34. On 21 October, the IDF magazine Bamahaneh reported that officers commanding IDF troops in the West Bank would thenceforth be instructed to use tank fire against targets in populated areas in the West Bank. The magazine also reported that the Central Command had decided to increase the number of IDF troops, tanks and armoured personnel carriers stationed in the West Bank. A senior military source explained that the IDF was not willing to take any risks and was preparing soldiers for the eventuality of another confrontation with the Palestinians. (Ha'aretz, 21 October)

35. On 25 October, it was reported that soldiers and settlers had been placed on high alert for fear that Islamic Jihad "terrorists" might attempt to carry out kidnappings. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai ordered the security forces to maintain a high level of alert amid specific warnings of an attempted suicide attack by Muslim extremists on the anniversary of the assassination of Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shakaki. (Jerusalem Post, 25 October)

36. On 29 October, Foreign Minister David Levy told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee that the Government was in distress over the Oslo Accords, which, he claimed, had been "forced upon it". According to an official briefing, Mr. Levy stated that the Government had determined that it would not abandon the settlers on diplomatic, moral or political grounds. While strongly criticizing the Oslo Accords, he stressed, however, the Government's commitment, albeit unwillingly, to honour them. (Jerusalem Post, 30 October)

37. On 31 October, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed that the Jewish settlement in Hebron would never be uprooted. Featured as a guest speaker before the Central Committee of the National Religious Party, Mr. Netanyahu cited maintaining and strengthening the Jewish settlement in Hebron and safeguarding the tombs of the Jewish patriarchs as his Government's twin goals in the talks on redeployment. (Jerusalem Post, 1 November)

38. On 1 November 1996, it was reported that the Israeli army had begun building two concrete walls in order to separate Israel from the West Bank. The two-mile-long walls in the northern West Bank, in the Tulkarm and Kalkiliya areas. The decision to erect the walls was taken by the Labour coalition of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 November)

39. On 3 November, the Palestinian Authority Health Ministry published a report stating that the closure that had been in force in the Gaza Strip for a month had already caused the death of 17 Palestinians, who were unable to receive adequate medical treatment. The report, published in the Al-Quds newspaper, stated that the Israeli authorities had allowed only 80 out of 260 patients requiring medical treatment in Israel or in Jordan to leave the Strip. According to the Palestinian Authority Health Ministry, the 17 patients who died were among those whose entry to Israel had not been approved. (Ha'aretz, 4 November)

40. On 5 November, joint Israeli and Palestinian patrols resumed in Jenin and Jericho, more than a month after they were halted following the violent riots in the territories. An Israeli security source stated that the deployment of joint patrols in other West Bank cities was reportedly under discussion and would be resumed shortly. The resumption of the joint patrols in Jenin and Jericho came after weeks of consultations between Israeli and Palestinian officers and a meeting between the various joint patrols. Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai stated that the mutual confidence between the two forces had been greatly shaken during the riots. Speaking before the Israel-America Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Mordechai noted that at least two Israeli soldiers had been shot by Palestinian members of the joint patrols. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 6 November)

41. On 8 November, it was reported that Palestinian policemen and Israeli soldiers had resumed their joint patrols in the area of Jericho, Jenin and Tulkarm. The patrols were suspended following the outbreak of clashes at the end of September 1996. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 November)

42. On 8 November, the Israeli Minister of Infrastructure, Ariel Sharon, reportedly announced a general plan whereby large settlements would be constructed between Jerusalem and Ramallah. These settlements would form part of a longer line of settlements which would extend from the north of Jerusalem to the suburbs of Tel Aviv. The director of the mapping department at the Arab Studies Centre, Khalil Tofakji, indicated that the plan had been blueprinted back in 1990, when Sharon was Minister of Housing. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 November)

43. On 10 November, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai stated that there would be no mass round-ups of Jewish extremists in Hebron. He added, however, that the Government would not hesitate to detain extremists in order to prevent violence and the disruption of the IDF redeployment in the city. Mr. Mordechai explained that the Government's policy was to resort to administrative detention orders against Jews only if the security forces were sure that a person posed a real threat that could inflame the situation and endanger Jews or Arabs. Finally, he indicated that there was no intention of removing any Jewish settlers from Hebron. (Jerusalem Post, 11 November)

44. On 12 November, an acrimonious exchange between the left and right took place in the Knesset Interior Committee during a discussion about the beatification of Baruch Goldstein's grave. The Committee eventually decided to ask the State Comptroller to investigate how the area surrounding the grave of the man who had murdered 29 Muslim worshippers in Hebron in 1994 had been turned

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into a garden with numerous visitors. The Committee also decided to ask the Religious Affairs Ministry and the Civil Administration to "consider transferring the grave to a more modest site". The grave is located in Meir Kahane Park near the entrance to the Kiryat Arba settlement. In addition to the tombstone, the site comprises a tiled floor, a wash basin, two bookcases for prayer books and a charity box. A sign indicates that the site is meant only for saying prayers and chanting psalms and that men and women should stand separately. The grave is inscribed with the word "martyr" and the inscription "He gave his life for the people of Israel, its Torah and its land ... He was killed sanctifying God's name". (Jerusalem Post, 13 November)

45. On 17 November, it was reported that the Government had decided to work for the strengthening of Israeli sovereignty in East Jerusalem. An interministerial panel headed by Interior Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani was reportedly preparing a plan to strengthen the Israeli presence in East Jerusalem. According to a senior government source, the plan was aimed at "making East Jerusalem look like West Jerusalem". The source also indicated that "Jerusalem was the capital of Israel and all of it had to look the same". The decision to strengthen Israeli sovereignty in East Jerusalem was taken by the Interministerial Committee on Jerusalem Affairs headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Jerusalem Municipality and various ministries were requested to submit a five-year action plan in their fields of competence. The Jerusalem Municipality, the Interior Security Ministry and the Transport Ministry had already submitted several proposals to the interministerial panel. Interior Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani urged the other ministries to complete their action plans and submit them to the panel as soon as possible so that it could present an overall plan for approval by the Interministerial Committee. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also urged the ministers to hurry up in elaborating their plans. (Ha'aretz, 17 November)

46. On 18 November, it was reported that a senior IDF commander had revealed that combat troops carried out more patrols in the territories and performed less training in the field owing to renewed demands on the IDF to deploy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The officer stated that the modification in the use of troops had been decided following the recent violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during which hundreds of troops were dispatched to those areas in order to suppress Palestinian rioters. (Jerusalem Post, 18 November)

47. On 19 November, Palestinian Authority Minister Abed-Rabbo warned that should the policy of the Government of Israel continue along its current track, it would be heading towards a "total confrontation" with the Palestinians. He stated at a press conference held at the Palestinian Authority Information Ministry in Ramallah that the current Israeli Government no longer had a policy of creating normal relations between the Palestinian people and Israelis. He stated that the Government had adopted a policy aimed at encouraging and protecting settlers who confiscated and stole Palestinian land and observed that the Government was taking daily steps and decisions that risked leading to a violent confrontation on a wide scale with the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority. (Jerusalem Post, 22 November)

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48. On 19 November, the Israeli Internal Security Service (Shin Beth) arrested 17 Palestinians in Hebron. They were accused of membership in the Islamic Jihad. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 November)

49. On 22 November, it was reported that the IDF had increased its presence in the positions it had taken up around Nablus in the wake of the September clashes. The IDF also set up a new position west of Nablus, along the main road. The IDF reinforcements have led to growing tension between the two sides. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 November)

50. On 24 November, Egypt stated that Israel's resumption of settlement activities in occupied Arab land constituted a violation of international law and the principles of the Middle East peace process. Foreign Minister Amr Moussa stated that, once again, Israel was striving to create a fait accompli in the occupied territories and ignore the principle of "land for peace". Mr. Moussa warned that such policies and practices raised extremely dangerous and serious questions as to the true intentions of the current Government of Israel. The League of Arab States also warned that Israel's settlement building in the territories would increase tension and violence in the region and lead to the questioning of Israel's "intentions about the Middle East peace process". (Jerusalem Post, 25 November)

51. On 25 November, Farouk Kaddoumi, a senior aide to Yasser Arafat, was quoted as stating that Israel's behaviour justified suicide bomb attacks by Islamic militants. Mr. Kaddoumi, who is the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization's Political Department, stated in an interview published in the London-based Al-Wasat magazine that the policy of the Government of Israel of building additional settlements in the West Bank was pushing Palestinians towards resistance. (Jerusalem Post, 26 November)

52. On 25 November, the IDF dispatched large numbers of forces, including tanks and armoured personnel carriers, to the Gaza Strip and ordered officers commanding IDF troops in the region to be inflexible in their treatment of Palestinians. In addition, the IDF made it clear to the Palestinian Authority that a renewed outbreak of riots in the territories would lead to the implementation of military plans to enter Palestinian population centres. The move came after an incident in which Yasser Arafat allegedly instructed the Palestinian security forces to block the Netzarim junction. (Ha'aretz, 26 November)

53. On 28 November, the Association of Physicians for Human Rights protested against the decision by the Interministerial Committee on General Security Service (GSS) Affairs to extend once again the permission granted to the GSS to use "exceptional interrogation methods" during the interrogation of Palestinians. According to the Association, these methods were nothing but torture. The Association stated that the permission that the Interministerial Committee granted every three months was automatic and therefore an object of derision. It observed that this only meant that Israel had not learned a lesson from the death of the Palestinian detainee Abed Harizat and that it did not attach any importance to the fact that it was a signatory of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Association indicated further that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who

heads the Interministerial Committee on the GSS, had declared in his speech before the American Congress that "democracy and human rights were one of the three foundations of a permanent peace" and it called on him to act accordingly. (Ha'aretz, 29 November)

54. On 6 December, an official report prepared by the Information Ministry of the Palestinian Authority revealed that since the 1967 War, Israel had confiscated more than half the land in the occupied territories. The report stated that out of the 5.8 million dunums of land which constituted the total area of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Israeli authorities had confiscated more than 3 million dunums, which amounted to 74 per cent of the West Bank and 40 per cent of the Gaza Strip. The report added that since the signing of the Oslo I Agreement in September 1993 until September 1996, Israel had confiscated some 300,000 dunums of Arab land in the West Bank, using a number of security pretexts and a set of military orders. (The Jerusalem Times, 6 December)

55. On 6 December, it was reported that the Palestinian expert on settlement, Khalil Toufakji, noted that Israel had almost completed what he called a third Green Line, in reference to the 1967 border between Israel and the West Bank. Toufakji stated that the new line, which cuts through Palestinian villages north-west of Jerusalem, aimed to redefine the borders before the start of the final status talks between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. In another development, the Hebrew daily Yediot Aharanot reported earlier in the week that some $40 million had been raised by various Jewish organizations for the purpose of purchasing land and assets in Hebron, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and in the Negev. (The Jerusalem Times, 6 December)

56. On 13 December, the Cabinet voted with an overwhelming majority to reinstate financial subsidies to all settlers by conferring "top national priority" status on the territories. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was to head a ministerial committee for the implementation of the decision, designed to give settlers a range of tax breaks and preferential mortgage terms, as well as assist businesses with grants amounting to up to 30 per cent of the investment. The Palestinian Authority's Cabinet denounced Israel's decision as a "declaration of war" on the peace process and urged Palestinians to take to the streets to defend the land of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (Ha'aretz, 13 and 15 December; Jerusalem Post, 15 December)

57. On 13 December, it was reported that Palestinian sources estimated at 1,700 the number of martyrs killed by the Israeli occupation forces during the intifada. Approximately 100,000 others were wounded. According to a report, published by the Israeli human rights organization B'tselem, 1,251 Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers from the beginning of the intifada until August 1996. (The Jerusalem Times, 13 December)

58. On 20 December, Michel Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, issued a Christmas message condemning the Israeli authorities for turning Palestinian towns into "large prisons" and calling for religious leaders to work for peace at a time when peace seemed impossible. Sabbah, the first Palestinian to serve as the titular head of the Roman Catholic community in the Holy Land, described

the current year as one of the most difficult periods in the life of the Palestinian people. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 22 December)

59. On 23 December, a Palestinian source, Colonel Saeb Ajez, announced that an agreement had been reached concerning the reopening of the road running parallel to the Gaza coastline west of the Netzarim settlement. The road had been closed for the past two years. Ajez added that the agreement included new security arrangements for the Netzarim settlement. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 December)

2. Incidents resulting from the occupation

60. The following abbreviations of the names of newspapers are used in the tables:

H: Ha'aretz

JP: Jerusalem Post

JT: The Jerusalem Times.

(a) List of Palestinians killed by troops or Israeli civilians

Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
25 September	Ibrahim or Raied Sharaka, 15	Jalazone refugee camp (West Bank)	Killed by IDF gunfire during a violent demonstration at an IDF checkpoint located at the southern entrance to El-Bireh, near Ramallah. (H, 26, 27, 29, 30 September; JP, 26 September)
25 September	Munir Jamhour, 22 or 23	Beit Anan (Ramallah area)	Killed by IDF gunfire during a violent demonstration at an IDF checkpoint at the southern entrance to El-Bireh, near Ramallah. (H, 26, 27, 29 and 30 September; JP, 26 September)
25 September	Ashraf el Ashraf, 28	Gaza Strip	Palestinian policeman. Killed by IDF gunfire during a violent demonstration at an IDF checkpoint at the southern entrance to El-Bireh, near Ramallah. (H, 26, 27, 29, 30 September; JP, 26 September)
25 September	(Name and age not reported)	(Not reported)	Killed by IDF gunfire during a violent demonstration at an IDF checkpoint at the southern entrance to El-Bireh, near Ramallah. (H, 26, 27, 29 and 30 September; JP, 26 September)

Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
25 September	3 persons (names and ages not reported)	(Not reported)	Palestinian youth. Shot in the head by Israeli police during riots on the Temple Mount. According to the director of Mukassad Hospital, was killed by live ammunition, a charge denied by the Jerusalem district police spokesman, who stated that only rubber bullets and tear gas had been used during the riots. (H, 27 September)
26 September	(Name and age not reported)	(Not reported)	Killed during an exchange of fire between IDF soldiers and Palestinian policemen at an Israeli army roadblock at the southern entrance to El-Bireh village, near Ramallah. (H, 26, 27, 29 and 30 September; JP, 26 September)
26 September	Mura Sa'ad, 17	Deir Al Balah (Gaza Strip)	Student. Shot in the neck by IDF soldiers who opened fire at Palestinian pupils throwing stones in the direction of the Kfar Darom settlement. (H, 27 September and 1 October; JP, 27 September)
26 September	Mohammed Al-Astal, 14	Khan Younis (Gaza Strip)	Shot by Israeli forces in the head, chest and arms during riots in the Gaza Strip. (H, 27 September and 1 October; JP, 27 September)
26 September	Qasim Al-Njaili, 15	Gaza Strip	Shot by Israeli forces in the chest during riots in the Gaza Strip. (H, 27 September and 1 October; JP, 27 September)
26 September	Basil Na'im, 25	Beit Hanoun (Gaza Strip)	Nurse at Shifa Hospital in Gaza. Shot in the chest while helping the wounded. Another nurse and an ambulance driver were wounded in the same incident. (H, 27 September and 1 October; JP, 27 September)
26 September	20 persons (names and ages not reported)	Gaza Strip	Killed by Israeli forces during riots in the Gaza Strip. (H, JP, 27 September)

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Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
26 September	Mazen Abu-Ahur, 21	(Not reported)	Officer in the Palestinian Preventive Security Service. Killed by IDF soldiers during clashes with Palestinian demonstrators and Palestinian policemen near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. (H, JP, 27 September)
26 September	Mohammed Abu-Srur, 22	Bethlehem	Killed by IDF soldiers during clashes with Palestinian demonstrators and Palestinian policemen near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. (H, JP, 27 September)
26 September	(Name not reported), 15	(Not reported)	Killed during an exchange of fire between IDF soldiers and Palestinian policemen at an Israeli army roadblock at the southern entrance to El-Bireh village, near Ramallah. (H, 27 and 29 September; JP, 27 September)
26 September	10 persons (names and ages not reported)	(Not reported)	Killed during an exchange of fire between IDF soldiers and Palestinian policemen at an Israeli army roadblock at the southern entrance to El-Bireh village, near Ramallah. (H, 27 and 29 September; JP, 27 September)
26 September	Iyad Tripi, 22	El-Bireh	Killed during an exchange of fire between IDF soldiers and Palestinian policemen at an Israeli army roadblock at the southern entrance to El-Bireh village, near Ramallah. (H, 27 and 29 September; JP, 27 September)
26 September	(Name and age not reported)	(Not reported)	Died in a hospital in Ramallah of wounds sustained during clashes between Palestinian demonstrators and IDF soldiers at an army roadblock at the entrance to Ramallah. (H, 27 September)
26 September	2 persons (names and ages not reported)	(Not reported)	Killed during exchanges of fire between armed Palestinians and IDF soldiers at Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. (H, JP, 27 September)
27 September	Ibrahim Abu Ghana or Rnam, 19	A-Tur neighbourhood (Jerusalem)	Shot in the neck by the police during unrest on the Temple Mount. (H, JP, 29 September)

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Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
27 September	Iman Edkeikdak, 25 or 28	A-Tur neighbourhood	Shot in the head by the police during unrest on the Temple Mount. (H, JP, 27 September)
27 September	Jawad Bazlamit, 20	El Suwani or Ras el Amud neighbourhood	Shot in the head by the police during unrest on the Temple Mount. (H, JP, 27 September)
27 September	Hanin Kassem, five-month-old baby girl	Shu'fat refugee camp	According to her family, died of tear-gas inhalation during clashes between Palestinian youths and the police in the Shu'fat refugee camp. A doctor in Mukassad Hospital stated, however, that it was impossible to determine whether this had effectively been the case since the baby had suffered from cardiac malfunction since birth. An autopsy was not performed, on religious grounds. (H, 29 September)
27 September	Zi'ad el Sharif, 37	Tulkarm	Officer in the Palestinian security service. Killed during exchanges of fire between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian policemen near Jericho. (H, 29 September)
27 September	Firas Awjna, 20	Jericho	Killed during exchanges of fire between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian policemen near Jericho. (H, 29 September)
27 September	Fadi Atiya, 19	Jericho	Killed during exchanges of fire between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian policemen near Jericho. (H, 29 September)
29 September	Mansur Shwamra, 22	Kadura refugee camp	Shot in the head during clashes with IDF soldiers on 25 September. Died of his wounds in the State-owned hospital in Ramallah. (H, 30 September)
1 October	(Name and age not reported)	Gaza Strip	Palestinian boy. Died in hospital from wounds sustained during riots in Gaza a week earlier. (JP, 2 October)
1 October	(Name and age not reported)	Gaza Strip	Palestinian policeman. Died in hospital of wounds sustained during riots in Gaza a week earlier. (JP, 2 October)

Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
2 October	Abed el Karim Isa el B'tir, 12 or 13	Sa'ir village (Hebron area)	Shot dead by IDF soldiers during a stone-throwing incident on the Halhoul bypass road. Three or four other youths were moderately to seriously injured during the same incident. According to an investigator from the human rights organization Al-Haq, there had been no justification for the shooting, which, according to eyewitnesses, occurred with no provocation whatsoever on the part of the youths. (H, 3 and 4 October; JP, 3 October)
7 October	Ri'ad Li'am Raheb, 25	Gaza Strip	Palestinian policeman. Shot in the head during riots in the Gaza Strip. Died of his wounds in hospital. (H, 8 October)
21 October	Fathi Sahouri, 40, 42 or 43	Sinjil village (Ramallah area)	Found dead in his vehicle on the Ramallah bypass road. According to a police spokesman, killed in a stone-throwing incident. He stated that it was unclear whether Arabs or Jews were behind the stoning. Palestinian eyewitnesses claimed that the man had been killed by shots in the head fired from an Israeli vehicle, possibly by settlers. Palestinian doctors from the Ramallah Hospital who performed an autopsy also reported that the man had been killed by a bullet and not by a stone. (H, JP, 22, 23 and 28 October; JT, 25 October)
22 October	Abdullah Karakreh, 18 or 19	Sinjil village (Ramallah area)	Shot in the neck by IDF soldiers during a demonstration in protest of the killing of a resident of Sinjil village a day before, apparently by a settler. (H, JP, 23 October; JT, 25 October)
27 October	Hilmi Shoushi, 10 or 11	Husan village	Beaten to death by a settler from Betar after allegedly throwing stones at cars near Husan village. (H, JP, 29 and 30 October; also referred to in JT, 29 and 30 October)

Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
10 November	Atallah Hasan Amireh, 36	Naaleh village (or Naalin)	Palestinian landowner and father of seven. Shot in the chest by the IDF with live ammunition during peaceful Palestinian protests against land confiscation in the Ramallah area. (H, JP, 11 November; also referred to in JT, 15 November)
20 November	Ihab Jrir Abu Hadaf, 16	Gaza Strip	Shot in the stomach during clashes near the Kfar Darom settlement in the Gaza Strip on 26 September. Died in a hospital in Gaza where he had been receiving treatment since then. (H, 21 November)
12 December	Samir Abu Shaqfa, 40	Jabalia refugee camp	Shot dead by an Israeli citizen who claimed that he suspected him of being a burglar or a "terrorist". According to Palestinians, however, the man was killed in revenge against killing of a women settler and her son on 11 December. (H, JP, 13 December)
30 December	Ibrahim Abu Nassir, 33	Gaza Strip	Shot dead by a settler from Kfar Darom. According to the settler's version, he was shot after infiltrating into the settlement and trying to attack two residents. According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights which investigated the incident, the man did not enter the settlement but was shot on a path along the settlement's fence while he was on his way to visit his relatives. (H, JP, 31 December; H, 1 January)

(b) List of other Palestinians killed as a result of the occupation

Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
16 November	Mahmoud Sa'id Asfasa, 31 or 34	Kabatiya village (Jenin area)	Known Hamas activist. Released from an Israeli prison two months earlier. According to villagers, served numerous jail sentences for involvement with Hamas. Died in an explosion in his courtyard in Kabatiya, apparently while preparing a bomb. (H, 17 and 19 November; JP, 17 November)
21 November	Mouhamad Mahmoud Brhama, 12 or 13	Anzah village	Killed by a landmine he was playing with. According to an IDF investigation, the mine was planted by Jordanians before 1967. However, Palestinian villagers accused Israel of being behind the explosion, stating that soldiers holding exercises in the area left ammunition behind. (H, 22 November; JP, 22 and 24 November; also referred to in JT, 15 November)
21 or 22 November	Nimar Mouhamad J'rar, 13	Anzah village	Killed by a landmine he was playing with. According to an IDF investigation, the mine was planted by Jordanians before 1967. However, Palestinian villagers accused Israel of being behind the explosion stating that soldiers holding exercises in the area left ammunition behind them. (H, 22 November; JP, 22 and 24 November; also referred to in JT, 15 November)

(c) Other incidents

61. On 23 September, three IDF soldiers were slightly injured when a car driven by a Palestinian deliberately crashed into their jeep near the Alfei Menasheh settlement. When the three soldiers approached the vehicle, the driver threatened them with a gas canister and tried to escape. He was seriously wounded when he was shot after ignoring an order to stop. In another incident, shots were fired from Rafah at an IDF patrol, but there were no injuries or damage. The soldiers returned fire and began searching the area. (Ha'aretz, 24 and 25 September; Jerusalem Post, 26 September)

62. On 24 September, violent demonstrations broke out in East Jerusalem in protest against the opening of a new entrance to the Hashmonean Tunnel in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City. A general commercial strike was declared in East Jerusalem, and Arab educational institutions were closed at midday. In the morning, the Director of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine, as well as members of the Palestinian National Council, led a protest march through the streets of the Old City in which hundreds of Palestinians participated. The protesters were pushed back by police and border police forces when they reached the Via Dolorosa. Less than an hour later, another demonstration broke out at the Temple Mount compound, with dozens of youths throwing stones at policemen who were deployed at the entrance to the Mount. The policemen responded by firing rubber bullets in the air. One policeman was slightly injured in the eye during the demonstration. A dozen Palestinian youths were detained for throwing stones and bottles. Shortly thereafter, other riots erupted in the commercial district of East Jerusalem, with dozens of youths throwing stones at police and border police, who responded by firing rubber bullets; 11 Palestinians were arrested on suspicion of throwing stones. In another incident, protesters torched an Israeli truck near the Salah a-Din Street and a rented car near the American Colony Hotel. In western Jerusalem, dozens of Arab students from the Hebrew University and Peace Now activists protested against the opening of the tunnel and the demolition of Palestinian homes. In the Ramallah area, stones were thrown at an IDF patrol. Two other stone-throwing incidents took place in the Sufa crossing to the Gaza Strip. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 September)

63. On 24 September, disturbances were reported in Jerusalem when young Palestinians who gathered near the tunnel opened by the Israelis near the western wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque were prevented by the IDF from entering the holy compound. The unrest spread to Jerusalem's streets. Demonstrators burned an Israeli truck on East Jerusalem's Al Zahra street. Thirty Palestinians were detained. (The Jerusalem Times, 4 October)

64. On 25 September, violent clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians broke out throughout the territories as thousands of Palestinians vented their rage over the opening of the Hashmonean Tunnel near the Temple Mount. Eight Palestinians were killed by IDF gunfire and some 350 injured, most slightly, by tear-gas inhalation. Twelve IDF soldiers and an Israeli civilian were slightly to moderately injured by Palestinian police gunfire and by stones and bottles thrown by Palestinian protesters. The most violent incident occurred at a checkpoint located at the entrance to Ramallah. The incident began when between 1,000 and 1,500 Palestinians, many of whom were students at Bir Zeit University, approached an IDF checkpoint south of Ramallah to protest against the opening of the Hashmonean Tunnel and the policy of the Government of Israel. The Palestinians hurled stones and bottles at soldiers, who responded by firing rubber bullets, tear gas and warning shots in the air. Additional troops were dispatched to the checkpoint. Between 200 and 240 demonstrators were injured, some seriously. During an ensuing gun battle between Palestinian policemen and IDF troops, five Palestinians were killed (see list). Seven Israeli soldiers were wounded by Palestinian police gunfire; one soldier was injured by stones. In East Jerusalem, three Palestinian youths were shot dead (see list) during riots that erupted on the Temple Mount at the end of the prayers. The bodies of the three victims were taken to Mukassad Hospital, where 80 other injured

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Palestinians were being treated, 43 of whom were listed as being in moderate to serious condition, while the rest were slightly to moderately wounded. The hospital's director stated that there was no doubt that the three youths had been killed by live bullets. One eyewitness of the incident stated that policemen dressed as Arabs mingled with the crowd and shot indiscriminately. In another incident in East Jerusalem, mounted policemen and baton-wielding border policemen broke up a protest march of several hundred Palestinians. The Religious Affairs Minister of the Palestinian Authority, Hassan Tahboub, was injured when hit in the head by border policemen wielding batons. Jerusalem Mufti Akram Sabri was also injured during the clash. During other incidents, 10 Palestinians were slightly injured, while 7 were detained when other protest marches were forcibly dispersed in East Jerusalem, where a general commercial strike was proclaimed at 12 noon. In Beit Hanina and the Shu'fat refugee camp, youths threw stones at Israeli vehicles. In A-Tur neighbourhood, youths burned tires and blocked a road. In the Isawiya village in East Jerusalem, youths threw stones at border police troops who responded by firing rubber bullets and tear gas and injuring two Palestinians. Riots also took place in Ras el Amud and Abu Dis. During clashes with IDF and border police troops in Bethlehem, 90 Palestinians were injured at Rachel's Tomb, 12 by gunfire. The confrontation began when hundreds of Palestinians from Bethlehem and the Aida refugee camp arrived at the tomb and set fire to scaffolding that was put up as part of the works to "protect" the site. Palestinians clashed with soldiers and border policemen who responded by using tear gas, throwing shock grenades and firing gravel at the demonstrators. Additional shooting incidents took place later in the day; four Palestinians were wounded. In an earlier demonstration in Bethlehem, hundreds of students of the University of Bethlehem headed towards Rachel's Tomb, throwing stones at the IDF and border police troops, who dispersed them without causing any injuries. A general commercial strike was observed for two hours in Hebron, where a few dozen Palestinians burned an Israeli flag. In Jenin, the District Governor and the Police Chief led a protest march of 10,000 Palestinians. Another protest march, in which 2,000 Palestinians, including school children, participated, was held in Kalkiliya, with demonstrators carrying signs condemning the opening of the tunnel in the Old City of Jerusalem and the Government's policy of land confiscation and settlement expansion. Other demonstrations took place in Jericho, Tulkarm and Nablus. In the Gaza Strip, several hundred Palestinians demonstrated at the Netzarim junction. The army stated that the demonstrators were dispersed peacefully. In Gaza City, some 5,000 high school students chanted "death to the criminal" (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu) and burned an Israel flag. Commenting on the events in the territories, Yasser Arafat stated that he held the Government of Israel responsible for the deterioration of the situation. Mr. Arafat accused the Government of oppressing the Palestinian people who protested against the violation of the peace accords and the opening of the Hashmonean Tunnel under holy Muslim sites. The Palestinian Authority declared a national day of mourning following the killing and wounding of Palestinian demonstrators. (Jerusalem Post, 26 September; Ha'aretz, 26 and 30 September)

65. On 25 September, clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces at the entrance to El-Bireh resulted in the death of seven Palestinians, three of whom were policemen. Clashes also occurred at Rachel's Tomb at the entrance to Bethlehem. The number of injured in El-Bireh and Bethlehem was estimated at 400. Border guards and soldiers also attacked a crowd of peaceful protesters in

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Jerusalem, among whom were three Palestinian Authority ministers and three members of the Palestinian Council. The most violent clashes took place at the southern entrance to El-Bireh, at the Israeli military checkpoint, which was attacked by stone-throwing demonstrators. Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas. Some 250 Bir Zeit University students were injured during the confrontations. When the Israeli forces entered territory under the control of the Palestinian Authority at the entrances to El-Bireh and Ramallah, both within the A Area, Palestinian security forces intervened. Three policemen were killed by the Israeli forces. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September and 4 October)

66. On 26 September, dozens of Palestinians were killed and hundreds more injured during clashes in the territories between Israeli soldiers, Palestinian demonstrators and Palestinian police. In addition, 11 Israeli soldiers were killed and 55 injured. Three Israeli civilians were also injured. According to the Palestinian Authority Chairman, 69 Palestinians were killed and 1,086 injured. According to Riyad Zanoun, the Health Minister of the Palestinian Authority, 44 Palestinians were killed by IDF soldiers, while 739 were injured (392 in the Gaza Strip and 347 in the West Bank). Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai declared a state of emergency, and all available regular soldiers, tanks, armoured personnel carriers, helicopter gunships and other sophisticated weapons were dispatched to the territories to help suppress the escalating conflict. The following incidents were reported: in the Gaza Strip, an estimated 24 Palestinians, mostly policemen, were killed (see list), while 350 were wounded by live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas during exchanges of fire between IDF troops and Palestinians, including Palestinian officers and policemen. Some four Israeli soldiers were killed and 30 wounded in what was described by the IDF as a war rather than an intifada. According to the IDF, thousands of Palestinians took part in the attacks. Army officials stated that the Palestinians would first start throwing stones and firebombs, which were subsequently followed by live gunfire. The IDF used tear gas and rubber bullets to try to stop the riots, but subsequently resorted to firing live ammunition. The clashes started in the morning, at Kfar Darom, and then spread to the Netzarim, Erez, Morag and Gush Katif junctions. Hundreds of Palestinians converged on the fences surrounding the Kfar Darom and Ganei Tal settlements and started throwing stones at the settlers' houses. This quickly degenerated into shooting at soldiers and into the settlements. Bullets hit several houses but there were no injuries. At the order of OC Southern Command, a number of settlers were evacuated for fear that the Palestinians might enter the settlements and harm them. Soldiers stated that as numerous Palestinians were injured, hundreds of other residents arrived on the scene and tried to damage the settlements' greenhouses. At one point, the demonstrators converged on an IDF outpost in Kfar Darom and tried to force their way in but were pushed back and fired at by IDF soldiers. Later in the day, Palestinians marched on other IDF posts at the Morag, Netzarim, Gush Katif and Erez junctions. In one incident, some 1,000 Palestinians came from Rafah, near the Egyptian border, and threw stones and iron bars at IDF outposts and cut the fence separating the Egyptian from the Palestinian part of town. In Nissanit, settlers living on the outskirts of the settlement were moved further inward, while a number of women and children were evacuated to Ashkelon because of the shooting that could be heard in the settlement throughout the day. Relative calm had returned to the area by nightfall, except for occasional bursts of fire. In Bethlehem, two

Palestinians were killed (see list) and up to 160 injured during clashes near Rachel's Tomb. Two Israeli soldiers were also slightly injured during the clashes, which occurred when hundreds of demonstrators started to throw stones and bottles at the security forces that were deployed at the site. IDF and border police troops initially tried to disperse the demonstrators by using tear gas and firing rubber bullets, but then resorted to the use of live ammunition. Palestinian policemen responded, and an hour-long gun battle ensued. Some 160 wounded, most of them slightly injured by tear-gas inhalation and rubber bullets, were rushed to Palestinian hospitals in the area. Eighteen were injured by live gunfire. Thousands of Palestinians, including politicians and members of the Palestinian National Council, took part in the funeral of the two Palestinian victims of the clashes. At the El-Bireh roadblock, 11 Palestinians were killed (see list) and up to 57 injured during an exchange of fire between IDF soldiers and Palestinian policemen. Another Palestinian died (see list) in a hospital in Ramallah of wounds sustained in a clash which occurred at the same roadblock the day before, thus raising to 17 the number of Palestinians who had been shot dead at the roadblock. An Israeli civilian was killed and seven Israeli soldiers were injured during the clashes which broke out when hundreds of residents set out from Ramallah to an IDF roadblock located at the southern entrance to El-Bireh village. The demonstrators threw stones and empty bottles at the soldiers, who responded with gunfire. Palestinian policemen returned fire, and a gun battle ensued for several hours, with Israeli soldiers, snipers and helicopter gunships firing at the crowd. Soldiers also started using machine-guns. According to residents, settlers also participated in the shooting. The bloodshed was halted only after the Palestinian police had declared a ceasefire. In Nablus, one or two Palestinians were killed (see list) and between 90 and 181 were wounded during riots and exchanges of fire at Joseph's Tomb. Six Israeli soldiers were killed and some eight injured during the clashes, which began when hundreds of Palestinian policemen and armed demonstrators stormed the shrine, uprooted fences, set two vehicles on fire, threw stones at soldiers, ransacked parts of the adjacent yeshiva and then took Israeli soldiers as prisoners of war. The soldiers, who opened fire at the demonstrators, called for help. Reinforcements came under a hail of stones and bullets, forcing soldiers to abandon their vehicles. An IDF helicopter tried to evacuate the wounded but had to retreat under heavy gunfire. The demonstrators also overturned border police jeeps and set at least six of them and an armed personnel carrier on fire. In Hebron, Palestinian sources reported that 44 Palestinians were injured, 3 of them seriously, during clashes between residents and IDF troops. In the villages of Beit Ummar, Al-Arub, Sir and Al-Fawar, residents set up barricades and clashed with the Israeli army. In Beit Ummar, residents also set fire to a settler bus. Thousands of Palestinians from Jenin staged a demonstration near the Ginat settlement and threw stones at IDF troops who responded by using tear gas and firing rubber bullets in the air; no injuries were reported. Large protest marches were also staged in Jenin itself and the surrounding villages, where a general strike was observed, as was the case in other West Bank cities. In Jerusalem, some 40 Palestinians were detained on charges of throwing stones and bottles and participating in protest marches that were banned by the police. In the Old City, dozens of baton-wielding policemen forcibly dispersed Palestinian religious and national leaders, as well as several dozen Palestinians who tried to stage a demonstration near the Hashmonean Tunnel. The Palestinians reportedly started throwing stones and bottles at border policemen, who responded with rubber bullets and detained a number of youths. Faisal Husseini, a senior PLO official in Jerusalem, lost consciousness after being clubbed by the border police and was transferred to Makassad Hospital. Two other Palestinian Council members were slightly injured by border policemen. In other incidents, Palestinians from the Jabel Mukaber village threw stones at houses located on the outskirts of the Harmon Hanatziv settlement, shattering several windows. Palestinian youths set fire to tires and blocked roads. In the A-Tur neighbourhood, Palestinian youths also set tires on fire and placed rocks on the main road, but were quickly dispersed by the police. Hundreds of Palestinians demonstrated in the Abu-Dis neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, with youths throwing stones at an IDF patrol and clashing with IDF soldiers and the police. Other incidents involving the throwing of stones at police forces and Israeli vehicles occurred in the Shu'fat refugee camp and Isawiya village. Shots were fired at cars at the southern entrance of the new Gush Etzion-Jerusalem tunnel, forcing its closure for one hour. There were no injuries. Other shots were fired near the Gilo roadblock at the entrance to Bethlehem, slightly to moderately injuring an Israeli soldier. In a further development, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad both issued statements calling on the Palestinian people to escalate their struggle against Israel and avenge the killing of Palestinians by Israeli forces. (Jerusalem Post, 27 September; Ha'aretz, 27, 29 and 30 September)

67. On 26 September, violent confrontations resulted in the killing of 25 Palestinians at Erez and Netzarim in the Gaza Strip and 19 others in the West Bank. Israel forces used Cobra military helicopters and heavy automatic weapons against unarmed Palestinians. The Israeli army also moved tanks into the West Bank, the first time they had been deployed there since 1967. Israeli soldiers killed seven Palestinians and wounded three others during a battle at Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September and 4 October)

68. On 27 September, three Palestinians were shot dead (see list) and 120 injured, two of them seriously, when police stormed the Temple Mount, allegedly after Muslim worshippers had begun rioting there. Ten policemen were slightly injured during the confrontation, which, according to the police, started when hundreds of youths began chanting "Allah Akbar" in a threatening way, closing in on the policemen stationed on the Mount and throwing stones. The police allegedly had no other choice but to open fire. According to the Jerusalem police chief, only tear gas and rubber bullets were fired. However, Palestinian sources presented a very different picture of the incident. They stated that the police had opened fire too quickly, using live ammunition. They claimed that only a small group of youths had thrown stones, and that the calls of "Allah Akbar" had in fact been only the traditional call at the end of the prayer. They charged that rubber bullets and batons were used against the first worshippers, who fled the site through the Lions' Gate. When they returned to the Mount, they found themselves on a real battle ground, with the police firing tear gas into the Al-Aqsa Mosque in order to flush out the worshippers who had taken refuge inside. According to Palestinian Council member Hatem Abed Elkader, who attended the prayers, the shooting started immediately after the prayer, with no provocation on the part of the worshippers. He stated that the worshippers had no time to "even put on their shoes and leave, when suddenly shots were fired at the entrance to the Mosque". According to another witness, a reporter for the Voice of Palestine, residents who carried the casualties were also beaten by policemen. In an earlier incident near the

Temple Mount before the prayers, Palestinian youths threw bottles at policemen guarding the new entrance to the Hashmonean Tunnel. A police spokesman stated that eight youths had been detained. There were no injuries. Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani, who went to the Mount immediately after the disturbances were brought under control, praised the police response. Later in the day, hundreds of Palestinians attended the funerals of the two persons killed during the Temple Mount incident. After the funeral, several participants clashed with police and border police on the Mount of Olives and were dispersed with tear gas and rubber bullets. Sporadic unrest also occurred in the Shu'fat refugee camp, in Abu Tor and Jebel Mukaber, with youths burning tires and setting up stone barricades on several streets. As a result of the clashes between Palestinians and the police forces in East Jerusalem and the Kalandia refugee camp, the number of Palestinians injured in the Jerusalem area rose to 157. In a related development, the body of a five-month-old baby girl from the Shu'fat refugee camp was brought to Mukassad Hospital in East Jerusalem (see list). Her family accused the police of causing her death from tear-gas inhalation near her home during clashes between Palestinian youths and the police. Three Palestinians were killed (see list) in other incidents in the West Bank during exchanges of fire near the Elisha settlement located north-east of Jericho. The incident began after the noon prayer, when thousands of Palestinians, led by the Palestinian Authority Minister of Municipal Affairs, staged a protest march through Jericho. Subsequently, hundreds of demonstrators marched towards the "Nahal" outpost near the Elisha settlement and threw stones at IDF soldiers, who responded with gunfire, injuring a number of Palestinians. Palestinian police returned fire, and 3 Palestinians were killed and 35 others injured during the ensuing gun battle. Two IDF soldiers were moderately to seriously injured during the exchange of fire, which stopped only after the IDF dispatched tanks and armoured personnel carriers to the scene. Clashes took place in all West Bank cities, with the IDF deploying helicopter gunships and even using machine-guns to shoot at Palestinians. In Tulkarm, two border policemen were killed when Palestinian policemen opened fire inside the Israeli-Palestinian coordination office. Numerous Palestinians were reportedly wounded in the ensuing gun battle between Israeli forces and Palestinians. In Ramallah, hundreds of Palestinians, including Palestinian policemen, shot at IDF troops, who responded with gunfire. In the Abu Dis area, Palestinians, including Palestinian policemen, clashed with IDF troops, injuring five soldiers. Seventeen Israeli soldiers were reportedly wounded during the incidents in the West Bank. Elsewhere in the West Bank, numerous armoured forces were deployed around Nablus as a warning to the Palestinians that Israel would not hesitate to reoccupy the city should the situation there deteriorate. In Rafah, in the Gaza Strip, riots erupted when hundreds of Palestinians walked to the Egyptian part of the town, shouting at Israeli soldiers that they had come to slaughter them. The protesters threw stones and bottles and fired at an army outpost on the border. An Israeli officer was killed and two soldiers and two Israelis were injured during the exchange of fire. According to Palestinian sources, 25 Palestinians were injured by IDF gunfire. According to the IDF, Egyptian soldiers took part in the shooting from the Egyptian part of Rafah. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 29 September)

69. On 27 September, according to Palestinian sources, Israeli forces invaded the Holy Compound of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and started shooting at the 4,000 persons still bowed in prayer. Three persons were killed and 125 were injured.

Some 3,500 Israeli policemen and soldiers who encircled the compound fired live ammunition, tear gas and rubber bullets at the worshippers. The Israelis hindered the arrival of medical assistance, and delayed ambulances, doctors and nurses in evacuating the wounded to East Jerusalem hospitals. (The Jerusalem Times, 4 October)

70. On 28 September, sporadic clashes between Palestinians and IDF troops occurred in the territories, although their scope and scale had declined dramatically amid conciliation efforts between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. At the El-Bireh roadblock, 24 Palestinians were injured, most of them slightly to moderately, during clashes with IDF soldiers. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 29 September)

71. On 29 September, an IDF solider died of wounds sustained on 26 September during a clash with Palestinians near the Netzarim settlement in Gaza. He was the fifteenth soldier to have died as a result of the armed clashes. Two Israeli soldiers were slightly injured along the Israel-Egypt-Gaza border when dozens of Palestinians threw stones and seven incendiary bottles at an IDF outpost. Palestinian policemen who rushed to scene quickly dispersed the demonstrators. A number of incidents involving the throwing of stones at IDF soldiers took place in Ramallah. Protest marches were held in all West Bank towns under the Palestinian Authority's control. The demonstrators demanded that the Western Wall Tunnel be closed and protested against the policy of the Israeli Government. In Ramallah, Palestinian Authority Information Minister, Yasser Abed Rabbo, and a local Greek Catholic priest led a march of almost 1,000 Palestinian protesters. Hundreds of Palestinian policemen kept the protesters away from IDF roadblocks in the town. Palestinian policemen prevented a number of attempts by demonstrators to clash with IDF soldiers in several other flashpoints, including the Kalandia refugee camp and Hizma village north of Jerusalem. In the Kadura refugee camp, thousands of Palestinians attended the funeral of a 22-year-old Palestinian who died in hospital (see list) of injuries he sustained during clashes on 25 September. In the Old City of Jerusalem, an Israeli policeman was slightly injured when stones were thrown at policemen guarding the entrance to the Hashmonean Tunnel. In Bethlehem, Palestinian policemen kept some 200 protesters away from Rachel's Tomb. In another development, Palestinian sources reported that more tanks had been deployed in the territories. In Nablus, witnesses counted 36 tanks and armoured vehicles a few hundred metres from the city limits. In Jericho, two dozen tanks and armoured personnel carriers were sighted. Even in Jerusalem, army lorries with heavy armoured personnel carriers were seen moving up the road outside the Jaffa Gate. In Hebron, the IDF moved back to a hill in the south of town near a Muslim cemetery that it evacuated four months before. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 30 September)

72. On 1 October, the funerals of a Palestinian boy and a policeman who died (see list) in hospital of wounds sustained in the previous week's riots in Gaza brought out hundreds of residents to the streets, many chanting "death to the Jews". An Israeli boy was slightly wounded near Dhahiriya village in the Hebron hills when stones were thrown at the car he was travelling in. Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle and IDF troops near Ein Arik village in the Ramallah area; no harm or injuries were reported. A stone was thrown at an IDF soldier near Joseph's Tomb but the soldier was unharmed. Stones were thrown at

IDF tanks near Ramallah. IDF troops responded by firing in the air; no injuries were reported. In Gush Katif in the Gaza Strip, stones were thrown at IDF patrols and settlers' cars. Several settlers responded by firing in the air. It was further reported that Israeli tanks were stationed outside the Gaza Strip and that schools in Gaza were giving pupils instruction on how to behave in case of an Israeli invasion. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 2 October)

73. On 2 October, a Palestinian boy was killed (see list) and three or four youths injured by IDF gunfire during clashes with IDF troops in the Hebron hills. The confrontation reportedly took place in the Sa'ir area, where demonstrators had gathered despite the curfew imposed on the area, and threw stones at IDF troops, who responded with gunfire. Earlier in the day, soldiers shot and wounded another Palestinian youth, who had allegedly prepared a Molotov cocktail to be thrown at cars travelling on the Halhoul bypass road. In another incident in the Hebron area, several shots were fired at an Israeli citizen at the Zehuhit junction, without causing harm or injuries. In the city of Hebron, IDF troops chased dozens of stone-throwers through the alleys of the town's market, but did not fire tear gas or rubber bullets. In Kalkiliya, numerous residents placed sandbags in front of their homes as the IDF continued to deploy additional forces along the Green Line. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 3 October)

74. On 3 October, hundreds of protesters in Sa'ir village (Hebron area) burned United States flags and a poster of Benjamin Netanyahu following the funeral of a Palestinian boy who was shot dead the day before during clashes between stone-throwers and soldiers. Two Molotov cocktails were thrown at a bus near Karnei Shomron, but there were no injuries or damage. An incendiary bottle was thrown at a car near Marda in the Nablus area, causing no injuries or damage. Two incendiary bottles were thrown at an Israeli bus near the Karnei Shomron junction; no harm or injuries were reported. Two incendiary bottles were thrown at IDF patrols in the Ramallah area; no harm or injuries were reported. Shots were fired at a car outside the Psagot settlement near Ramallah. No one was injured during the incident; two bullet holes were found in the car. An IDF soldier was slightly injured by stones thrown at him near the A-Ram roadblock north of Jerusalem. An Israeli citizen was slightly injured when stones were thrown at a group of Israelis near Halhoul. Five incidents involving the throwing of stones at Israeli vehicles occurred in the Gaza Strip without causing any injuries. In another development in the Gaza Strip, IDF troops stepped up their patrols around settlements in the Gush Katif area for fear of attacks. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 4 October)

75. On 4 October, Muslim worshippers threw stones at the police stationed on the Temple Mount. The Jerusalem police chief immediately ordered the evacuation of Jewish worshippers and visitors from the Western Wall Plaza for fear that they might be hit by the stones. Muslim officials, headed by the Al-Aqsa Director Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, calmed the crowd, which halted the stone throwing and dispersed peacefully. No injuries were reported. In another incident, IDF soldiers opened fire at a Palestinian man who ran through an army roadblock in Halhoul near Hebron. The man was slightly injured in the leg. (Jerusalem Post, 6 October)

76. On 6 October, isolated incidents were reported in the territories. Two incidents involving the throwing of stones at IDF patrols occurred in Ramallah

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without causing any injuries, and stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the Jenin bypass road without causing any injuries. In another development, the IDF withdrew its tanks several hundred metres away from West Bank cities and pointed their barrels backwards, in order to defuse tensions in the area. (Ha'aretz, 7 October)

77. On 7 October, a Palestinian policeman who was critically injured in the head during the violent riots in the territories two weeks earlier died of his wounds (see list). His death raised the number of victims to 84, including 68 Palestinians, 15 Israelis and 1 Egyptian. Four incidents occurred in the territories in which stones were reportedly thrown at IDF troops in the Ramallah area; no injuries were reported. Other stone-throwing incidents took place in the Kalkiliya and Tulkarm areas. A fragmentation grenade was placed on the bypass road south of the Kiryat Arba settlement. The grenade was detected and defused by IDF soldiers. (Ha'aretz, 8 October)

78. On 10 October, isolated incidents involving the throwing of stones at IDF patrols occurred in the Ramallah area, without causing any harm or injuries. Two similar incidents took place in the Hebron area, also without causing any injuries. In another development, the IDF continued to strengthen its outposts in the territories, to set up new posts and provide soldiers with bullet-proof vests. The measures were said to be taken as part of preparations for the possibility of renewed outbreaks of violence in the territories. Moreover, the IDF, the Israeli police and border police mobilized additional forces in Israel and along the Green Line in order to thwart a possible attack during the second half of October. It was further reported that a number of Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists had been rounded up in areas under Israeli security control. (Ha'aretz, 11 October)

79. On 11 and 12 October, a number of isolated incidents were reported in the territories, including two incidents in which incendiary bottles were thrown in the Ramallah area without causing any harm or injuries. It was reported that the state of emergency imposed on the territories remained in force. (Ha'aretz, 13 October)

80. On 15 October, an Israeli citizen was slightly injured by a stone in Nablus. In another development, the IDF re-hoisted the Israeli flag above Joseph's Tomb. Worshippers were still prohibited from reaching the site. (Ha'aretz, 16 October)

81. On 16 October, a yeshiva student was stabbed in the shoulder and slightly wounded in Jerusalem's Old City. The student stated that two Palestinian youths who appeared to be aged 16 or 17 had attacked him and subsequently disappeared. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 17 October)

82. On 17 October, four armed Palestinians were arrested in the Ramallah area on suspicion of planning to carry out attacks. According to military sources, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad continued to issue warnings of possible attacks against Israel. The sources reported that security had been stepped up along the main road in the territories, which remained under a state of emergency. The same sources indicated that the number of IDF troops in the territories had been increased and that tanks had not returned to their bases. In another

incident, six residents of the Azun village in the Tulkarm area were arrested on suspicion of possessing weapons. The six were rounded up during raids carried out in the village by the IDF and the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) district police. Several weapons, including four makeshift guns, a revolver, knives, shears, IDF uniforms and inflammatory material were found during the raids. (Ha'aretz, 18 October)

83. On 18 October, a Palestinian from the Gaza Strip was slightly injured by IDF gunfire at a roadblock located between Khan Younis and Gush Katif. According to military sources, the incident occurred when the Palestinian tried to seize the weapon of one of the soldiers who were stationed at the roadblock. Military sources described the incident as grave and indicated that the soldiers had shown restraint in not killing their assailant, although the rules for opening fire allowed them to do so in such circumstances. In another incident, an IDF soldier was slightly injured by stones thrown at his vehicle in the Hebron area. In Ramallah, Palestinians threw stones at IDF troops without causing any harm or injuries. Three other incidents in which stones were thrown at Israelis occurred in the Hebron area without any reports of damage or injuries. (Ha'aretz, 20 October)

84. On 21 October, a Palestinian man, Fathi Sahouri, from Sinjil village was found dead (see list) in his car near an IDF roadblock on the Ramallah bypass road near O'fra settlement. According to a police spokesman, the Palestinian was killed in a stone-throwing incident. He stated that it was unclear whether Arabs or Jews were involved in the stoning. Palestinian eyewitnesses stated, however, that the Palestinian was killed by gunfire. A passenger who was in the same vehicle stated that he had heard an explosion when the Palestinian was hit. A human rights investigator indicated that during the four hours of investigation, the police tried to persuade the eyewitness, who was uninjured, to declare that the Palestinian had been hit by a stone. Other witnesses who were in a car driving behind the man's vehicle also stated that they had seen a person shooting from a vehicle with Israeli licence plates. Their report was corroborated by Palestinian doctors who performed an autopsy at the Ramallah Hospital. Pathologist Dr. Ahmed Heneichen stated that he had detected burn marks around a hole in the skull of the victim, a father of five. According to Palestinian sources, another Palestinian was injured in similar circumstances an hour and a half earlier. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 22, 23 and 28 October; also referred to in The Jerusalem Times, 25 October)

85. On 22 October, a 19-year-old Palestinian youth, Abdullah Karakreh, was shot in the neck and killed (see list) when IDF soldiers used gunfire to disperse Palestinian demonstrators protesting near the village of Sinjil against the death the night before of Fathi Sahouri, a resident of the village who they claimed had been shot dead by settlers. In the Gush Katif area, border police troops arrested a Palestinian who was in possession of an ammunition magazine, a knife and tear gas. Another Palestinian youth who tried to infiltrate into Israel was arrested in the vicinity of the Sufa crossing in the Gaza Strip. In another development, the spokesman for the Samaria and Judea (West Bank) district police stated that some 145 stone-throwing incidents in the territories had been reported to the police over the past two weeks. Settlement leaders claimed that the number was much higher and that most incidents went unreported.

(Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 23 October; also referred to in The Jerusalem Times, 25 October)

86. On 23 October, the police arrested dozens of Palestinians from the territories who stayed within the Green Line without work or residence permits. (Ha'aretz, 24 October)

87. On 24 October, Dan police shot and seriously wounded a 27-year-old Palestinian man from the territories who had fled while his documents were being checked at a routine roadblock near the Morasha junction. Four other Palestinians were taken for questioning. The Dan police chief stated that according to a preliminary investigation of the incident, the police had acted in accordance with regulations. He indicated, however, that as in all cases involving the opening of fire by policemen, the matter had to be investigated by the Justice Ministry's Police Investigations Division. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 October)

88. On 26 October, Islamic Jihad supporters marked with rallies and marches in Bir Zeit, Sheikh Radwan and Gaza the anniversary of the assassination of their leader, Fathi Shakaki, who was gunned down in Malta a year before. Shakaki was shot by two men outside his hotel in Malta, where he was staying on his way from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to Damascus. While the Mossad was widely believed to have been responsible for the killing, the Government of Israel has not acknowledged involvement in the assassination. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 27 October)

89. On 27 October, a settler from Hebron fired several shots in the air after stones were thrown at him in the centre of the town. There were no reports of injuries, but some property was damaged. Palestinian sources stated that the settler was detained by soldiers who were called to the scene. (Ha'aretz, 28 October)

90. On 27 October, a 10-year-old boy (see list) was beaten to death by a settler in the village of Husan, near Bethlehem. The settler, Nahum Korman, a security officer of Hadar Bitar from the Ofrat settlement, was arrested after the incident. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 November)

91. On 29 October, Palestinian youths who were attending the funeral of the boy killed by a settler two days earlier threw stones at Israeli soldiers from a nearby hill. Israeli troops stormed their position using live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas. A young boy had to be treated for a head wound inflicted by a tear-gas grenade. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 November)

92. On 29 October, dozens of Palestinian youths clashed with IDF soldiers in Husan village following the funeral of a Palestinian boy who was allegedly beaten to death by a Jewish settler on 27 October. The soldiers responded with tear gas, injuring one Palestinian. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 30 October)

93. On 3 November, Palestinian policemen fired warning shots in the direction of a border police vehicle that crossed into an area under the control of the Palestinian Authority south of Rachel's Tomb. The Israeli vehicle backed off. No damage or injuries were reported. (Ha'aretz, 4 November)

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94. On 5 November, two incidents involving the throwing of stones at Israeli vehicles occurred in the Ramallah area without causing damage or injuries. Stones were also thrown at Israeli and military vehicles in the Bethlehem area, also without causing damage or injuries. In a related development, sources in the Central Command reported that there had been a slight increase in the number of stone-throwing incidents over the previous few days. (Ha'aretz, 6 November)

95. On 5 November, the IDF raided the Samaritan quarter on Mount Gerizim in Nablus and arrested four men. Three guns and some 400 bullets were found in their homes. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 November)

96. On 6 November, a minor bomb explosion occurred in front of the East Jerusalem branch of the Ministry of the Interior. Four persons suffered slight injuries. No material damage was reported. Palestinian residents suspected Jewish extremists were behind the act. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 November)

97. On 7 November, a small bomb exploded near the entrance of the Interior Ministry's East Jerusalem bureau, slightly injuring four Palestinian women and a baby. Dozens of Palestinians were waiting in line outside the bureau when the bomb exploded. A Jerusalem police spokesman stated that the police were investigating all possibilities, including that the bombing was criminally motivated or carried out by Jewish or Palestinian extremists. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 8 November)

98. On 10 November, an 18-year-old Palestinian man who attempted to cross into Israel from the Gaza Strip was shot and moderately wounded by IDF soldiers after he had ignored an order to halt. (Ha'aretz, 11 November)

99. On 10 November, a member of the Land Defence Committee from the village of Naalin was shot dead (see list) by Israeli soldiers during a peaceful protest. The victim was participating in a protest organized by six villages in the Ramallah area against land confiscation for the expansion of the Kiryat Sefer settlement. In a separate development, clashes broke out in Hebron when Jewish settlers confronted a large crowd of Palestinian and Israeli demonstrators who had gathered to demand an immediate redeployment of the Israeli army. The IDF and police sided with the settlers and attacked the protesters. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 November)

100. On 16 November, a known Hamas activist was killed (see list) in a village near Jenin, apparently while preparing a bomb. In another incident, a 10-year-old Israeli boy suffered a fractured skull when the car he was travelling in near the Otzarin village in the West Bank was hit by a stone. IDF troops began searches in the area and detained for interrogation three Palestinian residents suspected of stoning cars. (Ha'aretz, 17 and 19 November; Jerusalem Post, 17 November)

101. On 18 November, the security forces arrested 10 Palestinians on suspicion of belonging to the Islamic Jihad. The arrests were made during a large-scale search operation in the Hebron area. (Ha'aretz, 19 November)

102. On 19 and 20 November, more than 30 Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists were arrested in the West Bank. Palestinian sources reported that more than 100

soldiers had participated in one operation near the Aliya Hospital in Hebron. The sources also reported that IDF troops had raided students' dormitories at the town's university and polytechnic, arresting nine students on suspicion of belonging to the Islamic Jihad. (Ha'aretz, 20 November)

103. On 20 November, a Palestinian youth who was injured during the violent clashes in the territories in September died of his wounds (see list) in a hospital in Gaza, thus bringing the Palestinian death toll to 70. In Nablus, thousands of students at Al-Najah University gathered for a rally to honour the Palestinians killed on the Temple Mount in clashes with IDF security forces in September. (Ha'aretz, 21 November)

104. On 21 or 22 November, two Palestinian boys died (see list) in the explosion of an old mine in Anzah village, near Jenin. According to an IDF investigation of the incident, the mines were used by the Jordanian army before 1967. According to the villagers, the IDF had carried out manoeuvres in the area on 20 November. They claimed that there was a link between the explosion and the military exercise. The villagers complained that soldiers exercising in the area were disrespectful and left explosive devices behind them. According to Palestinian sources, the residents stated that they had found a second mine planted under an olive tree in the same area, and reports indicated that the mines could have been planted by extremist Jewish settler organizations. In another incident, IDF soldiers shot and slightly to moderately wounded a Palestinian man who fled from a roadblock during a routine security check. The man was stopped by soldiers at a roadblock outside Ramallah. When they demanded to see his permit to enter Israel, he jumped out of the car and fled on foot. Soldiers ordered him to stop and shot him in the back of the leg above the knee when he did not do so. (Ha'aretz, 22 November; Jerusalem Post, 22 and 24 November; also referred to in The Jerusalem Times, 29 November)

105. On 23 November, four Palestinian youths allegedly attacked two border policemen who had stopped them at the Gilo checkpoint. The policemen were slightly injured. Additional border police and police forces were rushed to the scene and detained the Palestinians. (Ha'aretz, 25 November)

106. On 24 November, a Palestinian was slightly wounded at a military checkpoint at the southern entrance to Ramallah when an Israeli soldier fired at him. According to IDF sources, the man failed to stop his car when asked to do so by the soldiers. The source said the man fled from his car, which prompted the soldiers to open fire. The incident occurred against a background of increasing police and army violence at Israeli checkpoints. (The Jerusalem Times, 29 November)

107. On 26 November, two soldiers were slightly injured when two petrol bombs were thrown at their patrol vehicle in the village of Tufah near Hebron. The army stated that the two soldiers were evacuated for medical treatment and that IDF troops had launched searches for the perpetrators of the attack. (Jerusalem Post, 27 November)

108. On 29 November, a number of incidents took place in the territories. Military sources reported two incidents involving the throwing of stones at Israeli vehicles in the Ramallah area. A settler was slightly injured during

one of the incidents. Three other stone-throwing incidents took place in the Hebron area. (Ha'aretz, 1 December)

109. On 2 December, a young Palestinian woman was arrested in possession of a knife at a police roadblock in the Hebron area. During her interrogation, she stated that she had intended to stab a settler. An armed Palestinian youth was caught at a roadblock in Hebron in a similar incident. (Ha'aretz, 3 December)

110. On 7 December, Palestinian sources reported that IDF troops had arrested seven Hamas activists near Ramallah. (Ha'aretz, 9 December)

111. On 10 December, two incidents involving the throwing of stones at border police patrols occurred in the vicinity of the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque); no harm or injuries were reported. Other incidents involving the throwing of stones at settlers took place near the site, also with no injuries. In another development, it was reported that some 10 Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists had been arrested in the Hebron area, in Ramallah and in nearby villages. All the activists were arrested in areas under Israeli security control. (Ha'aretz, 11 December)

112. On 11 December, a woman settler from Beit El and her 12-year-old son were killed by "terrorists" in a drive-by shooting near the settlement. The woman's husband and four other children, aged 4 to 17, were wounded in the attack. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine took responsibility for the attack, announcing from Damascus that the organization would continue its struggle as long as the occupation and settlements continued to exist. Following the incident, IDF troops and Israeli policemen entered Ramallah, which is controlled by the Palestinian Authority, to search for the assailants. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that anyone who thought that they would uproot the people of Israel from their land and from the heart of their land by such acts of terror should know that Israel would uproot them. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 12 December)

113. On 12 December, a 40-year-old Palestinian worker from the Jabalia refugee camp was shot dead (see list) and four of his companions were wounded by an Israeli farmer. The Israeli initially told the police that he believed that the Palestinian was a burglar, but later contended that he suspected the Palestinian was a "terrorist" on his way to carry out an attack. The members of the victim's family claimed, however, that the killing was meant to avenge the fatal shooting of a woman settler and her son near Beit El by Arab "terrorists" on 11 December. Brig. Gen. Ziyad Atrash, a senior Palestinian police officer in Gaza, stated that information at his disposal discounted the possibility that the Palestinian was killed on suspicion of burglary. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat condemned the killing as a serious crime against a Palestinian worker who went to earn a living, adding that Israel had not shown any serious intention of uprooting "terrorism" against Palestinians. Police sources stated that the Israeli farmer would probably be charged with causing death by negligence for having fired shots before thoroughly checking the situation. In another incident, IDF troops discovered light ammunition as well as spent cartridges and cannon shells at the Karni crossing. Several stone-throwing incidents took place in the territories. Stones were thrown at a border police vehicle in the Hebron area. Other stone-throwing incidents

occurred near the Cave of the Patriarchs and on bypass roads. The IDF stepped up its patrols throughout the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 13 December; also referred to in The Jerusalem Times, 20 December)

114. On 18 December, five members of a Hamas cell believed to be on their way to carry out an attack in Israel were arrested by a border police undercover unit in the Bethlehem area. In another development, dozens of Palestinian policemen tried to block the IDF access road to Netzarim in an attempt to prevent the army from setting up a new outpost west of the settlement. The Palestinian policemen left the site after the IDF threatened to use "all the means at its disposal" against them. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 19 December)

115. On 20 December, a makeshift bomb exploded at a garbage dump west of the Karni border crossing. The explosion caused no injuries or damage. In another incident, an incendiary bottle was thrown at Beit Hadassah in Hebron. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 22 December)

116. On 22 December, three incidents in which stones were thrown at military and other Israeli vehicles took place in the Hebron area without causing any harm or injuries. Two additional stone-throwing incidents were reported on the Ramallah bypass road. A makeshift bomb exploded at a hitchhiking post near the Alon Shvut settlement. The explosion caused extensive damage to the hitchhiking post but no one was injured. Two incendiary bottles were thrown at IDF outposts in Hebron. Palestinian sources reported dozens of arrests in connection with the incident. Another incendiary bottle was thrown near Beit Hadassah. In another incident, a small explosive device attached to a gas canister went off on the Gaza bypass road. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 23 December)

117. On 24 December, it was reported that the IDF and the police had arrested several youths from the Hebron area on suspicion of throwing incendiary bottles at soldiers, border policemen and settlers in Hebron. A 10-year-old girl from a settlement in the Hebron area was slightly injured by a stone thrown at the vehicle she was travelling in near Halhoul. Two other incidents involving the throwing of stones at IDF vehicles took place in the Ramallah area. One border policeman was slightly injured in one of the incidents. (Ha'aretz, 24 December)

118. On 25 December, three firebombs were thrown at settlers and soldiers in Hebron, without causing any harm or injuries. Five Palestinians were arrested in connection with the incident. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 26 December)

119. On 26 December, an incendiary bottle was thrown at Beit Hasson, in Hebron. The bottle exploded on the road, without causing any harm or injuries. Six Palestinian youths suspected of involvement in the incident were taken for interrogation. (Ha'aretz, 27 December)

B. Administration of justice, including the right to a fair trial

1. Palestinian population

120. On 24 September, the High Court of Justice rejected an appeal by a Palestinian detainee that he be released earlier in order to enable him to travel to Holland for studies. The detainee, who was held on suspicion of involvement with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was placed in administrative detention 10 months before. The order was issued for six months but was subsequently extended by an additional four months, until 10 October, on "security grounds". A representative of the security forces claimed during the appeal hearings that the detainee's stay in Holland would not diminish the security threat that he posed. In addition, he announced that OC Central Command General Uzi Dayan had decided to extend his administrative detention by another six months until April 1997. On the basis of classified information they were presented with, the justices ruled that the refusal of the security forces to allow the defendant to travel abroad was based on the same motives as those justifying his administrative detention and therefore that the Court had no grounds to intervene. (Ha'aretz, 25 September)

121. On 30 September, the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court judge ruled that the death of a Palestinian resident of the territories as a result of shots fired by soldiers at his car was a "car accident". The Palestinian, Jamel Judat Abed el Karim, was reportedly killed by a bullet in the temple fired in the Fa'ra refugee camp in 1988 during disturbances and clashes between IDF soldiers and Palestinian youths. Since the incident was described as a car accident, the compensation claim against the State was rejected. (Ha'aretz, 1 October)

122. On 21 October, the High Court of Justice rejected an appeal by the Association of Terror Victims and Likud MK David Mena to overturn the previous Government's decision to award an exceptional compensation to the families of victims of the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) massacre. Alternatively, they asked the High Court to pay such compensations also to Israeli terror victims. Lawyer Shlomo Ravelski claimed in the appeal that Israeli terror victims were discriminated against by the decision to grant compensation to Palestinian families which he claimed trampled on the principles of the rule of law. (Ha'aretz, 22 October)

123. On 22 October, the Lod Military Court sentenced a 23-year-old resident of Gaza to nine and a half years of imprisonment for attempting to smuggle explosives into Israel. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 23 October)

124. On 27 October, the Haifa Magistrate's Court ordered the State of Israel to pay NIS 270,000 in compensation to a Palestinian youth who was the victim of an act of sodomy performed by a reservist soldier at the Tulkarm detention facility in 1992. The reservist was sentenced by a military court in May 1994 to 8 years of imprisonment. (Ha'aretz, 28 October)

125. On 8 November, it was reported that the Beer Sheva Magistrate's Court had accepted the appeal by a 16-year-old Palestinian youth against the severity of the sentence meted out to him for entering Israel illegally: 15 months in

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prison, 9 of which were taken from a previous suspended sentence. The justices ruled that the youth had to serve only a six-month prison term. The youth's lawyers stated in the appeal that the Magistrate's Court was wrong to judge the youth as if he were an adult, without asking a probation officer to submit a report about him and invite his parents to the hearing. With regard to the severity of the punishment, the lawyers claimed that the youth's previous suspended sentence was related to property offences and that there were no grounds to apply it to the offence of illegal entry into Israel. (Ha'aretz, 8 November)

126. On 10 November, a 14-and-a-half-year-old Palestinian boy, who was caught on the Israeli side of the security fence surrounding the Gaza Strip, was sentenced by an Israeli military court to four months in prison plus six months suspended sentence. The boy, from the Jabalia refugee camp, was caught on 5 November and a charge sheet was filed against him two days later. The authorities at the Erez detention facility, where he was detained until 10 November did not inform his family of the arrest. The judge gave the boy two options: to be tried the same day with no legal representation, or to be tried at a later date after an attorney had been appointed to defend him. The boy chose to be tried immediately and was therefore not represented by an attorney. According to the protocol of the trial, the boy told the court that he had not intended to enter Israel. He stated that he had crossed the fence for no reason while playing with friends in the vicinity. A civilian truck which passed by handed him over to the army. The boy stated further that he wanted to return home, that he was a pupil and that his family was looking for him. Lawyer Tamar Peleg, who was allowed to speak to the boy over the phone only on 10 November, and the Association for the Rights of the Child stated that they would appeal against the sentence. On 27 November, the Erez Military Appeals Court ordered the immediate release of the boy. (Ha'aretz, 11 and 28 November)

127. On 22 November, it was reported that the Israeli High Court had sanctioned the use of torture against Palestinian detainee Mohammed Hamdan. Hamdan, who comes from Beit Sira village, was suspected of membership in a militant Palestinian organization. The High Court indicated in the ruling that it believed that bodily physical torture forced activists to reveal information that could lead the police to prevent a military act in Israel. The same court indirectly sanctioned another case of torture when it rejected an appeal from the attorney of detainee Khader Mubarak, from Halhul near Hebron. The appeal could have prevented the Israeli interrogators from torturing Mubarak. Like Hamdan, Mubarak is also suspected of membership in a militant group. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 November)

128. On 28 November, a 26-year-old Palestinian man from a refugee camp near Jenin was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Nazareth Magistrate's Court for the 1992 murder of an Israeli farmer from moshav Meitav. In October 1992, the Palestinian and his cousin reportedly conspired to murder a Jew for nationalistic reasons. They were accused of stabbing the farmer, who was working alone in his field, 31 times and ignoring his pleas for mercy. The judges did not accept the defendant's claim that a confession he wrote himself was extracted by the General Security Services through torture. (Jerusalem Post, 29 November)

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129. On 12 December, the Dotan Military Court sentenced a Hamas activist to life imprisonment plus 10 years for having stabbed to death an Israeli soldier at an IDF base in the Jenin area in January 1996. (Ha'aretz, 13 December)

130. On 20 December, it was reported that a Palestinian military court had convicted three Palestinians of opening fire on an Israeli car near Ramallah on 11 December 1996, killing two Jewish settlers and injuring three others. Abdul Nasser Al Qaisi, 25, from Beit Jala, and Ibrahim Saleh Alqam, 24, from Ramallah, were sentenced to life imprisonment. Ibrahim Mas'ad Hani, 25, from Ramallah was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment. All were members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. (The Jerusalem Times, 20 December)

131. On 22 December, the Lod Military Court sentenced two Palestinians to life imprisonment for their involvement in the Tel Aviv and Ashkelon bus bombings in 1995. (Ha'aretz, 23 December)

2. Israelis

132. On 24 September, the High Court of Justice upheld in a precedent-setting five to two ruling the conviction of a rabbi on charges of incitement to racism. The rabbi, a teacher in Hebron, wrote an article entitled "An investigation into the laws of a non-Jew", which he distributed to his students in 1994, two months after Baruch Goldstein murdered 29 Arabs in the Cave of the Patriarchs (the Ibrahimi Mosque). The article argued that killing a non-Jew was not prohibited by the Torah and that while there were various rabbinical prohibitions on killing non-Jews, there was no punishment for violating these proscriptions. In April 1995, the rabbi was convicted of incitement to racism and attempting to manufacture and obtain illegal weapons, obstructing justice and trying to enter a closed military zone. He was sentenced to two years in prison, but was released earlier in 1996 after having served one third of his sentence, which was reduced for good behaviour. (Jerusalem Post, 25 September)

133. On 6 November, it was reported that a prominent member of the outlawed Kach movement had been arrested for sending an inflammatory message to Radio Israel. However, he was released on bail after questioning. (Jerusalem Post, 6 November)

134. On 8 November, it was reported that over the past year there had been a sharp decrease in the number of restricting orders prohibiting Jewish right-wing activists from entering various localities in the West Bank. On the other hand, there had been an increase in the number of orders prohibiting extreme right-wing activists from entering the Temple Mount complex. According to official figures published in Ha'aretz, the OC Central Command General Uzi Dayan had signed 23 restricting orders prohibiting Israelis from entering the whole or parts of the West Bank on 27 December 1995. Currently, only six such orders are valid. The number of orders prohibiting Jews from entering the Temple Mount increased from 9 on 1 January to the current 12. (Ha'aretz, 8 November)

135. On 17 November, a military court in Lod sentenced four soldiers from the Duvdevan undercover unit to one hour in prison and a fine of one agora (penny)

for killing a Palestinian while "not following the guidelines for opening fire". The undercover soldiers had reportedly negotiated a plea bargain in which they pleaded guilty in return for a light sentence. The incident reportedly occurred on 13 November 1993, when the soldiers opened fire at a car that did not stop at a roadblock near Salfit, killing one of the passengers, 18-year-old Iyad Badran. The driver stated that he had not seen a roadblock but only a flashing light and flares, which blinded him. He stopped anyway. The soldiers then opened fire, hitting Badran. The military prosecution stated that it would lodge an appeal with the Military Court of Appeals against the leniency of the sentence. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 19 November)

136. On 19 November, the Jaffa Military Court fined four Israeli undercover agents for causing the death by negligence of Iyad Awad. The fine imposed on each agent was one agora. Awad was killed at a checkpoint on 13 November 1993 while driving from Salfit in the Nablus area. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 November)

137. On 26 November, two border policemen who were filmed beating Palestinians were placed under house arrest by the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court. The Court did not comply with the request of the Jerusalem District Attorney that the policemen be remanded until the end of the proceedings against them. The two were released on a NIS 15,000 bail. Among the restrictions, the telephone lines to their homes were disconnected and they were not to meet with anyone. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 27 November)

138. On 3 December, the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court acquitted the former Kach spokesman, Noam Federman, of throwing firecrackers at Palestinians in 1993. His lawyer disclosed that Federman was acquitted because the police had destroyed the evidence (the firecrackers) before they could be examined by the judges. (Jerusalem Post, 4 December)

C. Treatment of civilians

1. General developments

(a) Harassment and physical ill-treatment

139. On 2 October, two Palestinian youths charged that IDF soldiers had forced them to drink urine after they were detained for interrogation in Hebron on 30 September. The youths stated that they had been detained together with 28 other Palestinians at a roadblock in the centre of Hebron when the city was under curfew. When they asked for water, soldiers brought them bottles containing a "stinking yellow liquid". Once they realized that the bottles contained urine they refused to drink but were beaten by soldiers and ordered to drink from the bottles. An IDF spokesman stated that the report was being investigated. (Ha'aretz, 3 October)

140. On 9 October, an IDF paratrooper was sentenced to 14 days of solitary confinement while his commander was sentenced to 28 days of confinement to barracks "for inappropriate behaviour" during an incident in Hebron. The incident, which was filmed by a British Broadcasting Corporation team, occurred

when stones and various objects were thrown at IDF troops who were carrying out operational missions in Hebron. The soldiers chased the stone-throwers, turned over fruit and vegetable stalls in the market and treated brutally Palestinians who found themselves at the site. In footage broadcast all over the world, Israeli soldiers were seen beating Palestinians, including children, in front of their families and vandalizing Palestinian property. (Ha'aretz, 10 October)

141. On 28 October, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) voiced concern over the recurrence of incidents involving the use of serious violence against Palestinian residents. The ACRI statement followed the death of a 10-year-old Palestinian boy who was allegedly beaten by the security officer of the Betar settlement. ACRI expressed fears that this grave phenomenon was largely influenced by the lenient attitude reflected in the non-enforcement of the law and the light sentences meted out to Israeli citizens who were convicted of extremely serious offences of violence and abuse against Palestinian residents. ACRI called upon the competent authorities to enforce the law vigorously and urged the judiciary to issue severe sentences and apply the same criteria when sentencing Jews and Arabs who were involved in cases of violence and unnecessary bodily harm as well as damage to property. (Ha'aretz, 29 October)

142. On 18 November, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani suspended from active duty the two border policemen who were shown on television Channel 1 hitting and kicking several Palestinians whom they had arrested near the A-Ram junction in northern Jerusalem. The footage, reportedly filmed by a Palestinian who witnessed the scene, also showed the border policemen sitting on one of the workers and forcing him to do push-ups. A Palestinian man who approached the border policemen, apparently to ask why they were abusing the men, was himself hit by one of them. The Palestinians were identified as workers who were trying to enter Israel illegally. Palestinian sources were quoted as stating that such abuse by the border police was common. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 19 November)

143. On 18 November, a 30-year-old woman, Ataf Abu Mayyaleh, the wife of a policeman from Force 17 (one of the Palestinian security services) charged that during a weapons search in her house in Hebron, a policewoman ordered her to strip off her clothes, shackled her and then beat and kicked her together with another officer. Mrs. Mayyaleh, who was three months pregnant at the time, was transferred unconscious to the Aliya Hospital in Hebron. Mrs. Mayyaleh stated that the policewoman had grabbed her by her hair and shackled her. She then closed the doors and the windows and ordered her to undress. When she refused, the policewoman stripped her naked and beat her with her weapon in the stomach and all over the body. She continued, that a policeman, whom family members identified as "Yaron", then entered the room and told the policewoman to continue beating her. As she was laid down naked on the floor they both kicked her and abused her verbally. Afterwards, they allowed her to dress and took her to the kitchen. Her husband, Issa Abu Mayyaleh, stated that he wanted to call the hospital because his wife was in a state of hysteria. The policemen prevented him from phoning and even disconnected the phone. Mr. Mayyaleh stated that when he told Yaron that his wife was pregnant and could die the policemen retorted: "If only she and that which is in her womb would die". According to Mr. Mayyaleh, Yaron allowed him to accompany his wife to the hospital only when he saw that she had lost consciousness. Mrs. Mayyaleh received medical

treatment in Aliya Hospital and was sent home after three hours. She was requested to return to the hospital every day for an examination of the foetus' condition. A statement issued by a police spokesman denied the accusation of humiliation of the woman and her husband. The spokesman did not deny that the policewoman could have ordered the woman to undress but described the beating and male intrusion into her bedroom as a big lie. He stated further that since the woman resisted the legal measures used it was necessary to apply a "reasonable amount of force" in order to shackle her. Bassem Eid, the Director of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, stated that he considered the charges worse than the filmed humiliation by border police of illegal Palestinian workers. In Hebron, which is a conservative and religious city, he observed, the incident would have ended in murder. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 21 November)

144. On 20 November, a Palestinian vendor from Dhahiriya was brought with injuries all over his body to the Soroka Medical Centre. According to eyewitnesses, the man was beaten by an inspector of the Beer Sheva municipality. After medical treatment, the man was arrested by the police on suspicion of staying in Israel illegally. According to one eyewitness, the incident occurred when municipality inspectors arrived in the town market. As the Palestinian vendor was collecting his merchandise, one inspector grabbed him from behind, threw him on an iron bar and kicked him. The vendor lay on the ground, shouting that his leg was broken. A patrol car arrived on the scene only half an hour later. Another eyewitness was quoted as stating that the inspector had attacked the Palestinian and kicked him all over his body. The Beer Sheva municipality, however, presented a totally different version of the incident. A municipality spokesman stated that, as part of an effort to put an end to peddling in the vicinity of the municipal market, two inspectors wanted to confiscate the vendor's merchandise. He hit the inspectors and was joined by dozens of other vendors who also tried to attack them. When the police arrived on the scene, most of the vendors had already escaped. The vendor who claimed to have been beaten was injured when he fell into a hole while fleeing the police. The spokesman concluded by asserting that the municipality inspectors did not even raise their hands. (Ha'aretz, 21 November)

145. On 20 November, it was reported that a week earlier three border policemen had seriously beaten five Palestinians who tried to enter Israel illegally. The Palestinians were subsequently returned to the autonomous areas. Some of them needed medical treatment. The Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Division opened a criminal investigation against the policemen. In the meantime, the policemen were transferred to Kiryat Shmona, away from Arab population centres. The policemen reportedly explained their action by what they described as their frustration at the inability to cope with the growing number of Palestinians who tried to enter Israel illegally. (Ha'aretz, 20 November)

146. On 20 November, border police commander Yisrael Sadan admitted that there had been an increase in the number of violent incidents against Palestinians by border policemen. Sadan addressed the Knesset Interior Committee during a special session to discuss the incident in which two border policemen were filmed beating and humiliating six Arabs near Jerusalem. He revealed that this case was not the only one, or even the most serious, but just the only one that was filmed. Without trying to justify the incident, Sadan described the

difficult work of border policemen who had to deal with thousands of Palestinians who tried to enter Israel illegally. He stated that there had been an approximately 20 per cent increase in the violence against Palestinians between January and October 1996, as opposed to the same period in the previous year. The Knesset Interior Committee chairman, Sallah Tarif (Labour) asked whether the change in Government could be responsible for creating an atmosphere in which policemen did not exercise restraint. Sadan rejected the possibility, stressing that the border police were not working for a particular Government but for the State. He stated that the increase in violence had been felt particularly after the wave of bombings in February and March. The head of the Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Division, Eran Shindar, also disclosed that there had been an increase in complaints of police brutality, particularly at checkpoints around Jerusalem. He noted that there were also a number of serious complaints of harassment and humiliation not involving physical violence. According to Mr. Shindar, there was a problem of disorganized reports and the fact that some files were closed for lack of proper complaints. He stated that the complainants did not want to cooperate with police investigations. He indicated that some 25 per cent of the cases could not be properly investigated, while an additional 30 per cent of the files were closed for other reasons. During the Committee meeting, MK Avraham Poraz stated that the picture of harassment by the border policemen was a gloomy one. He expressed regret that numerous guilty border policemen were tried in disciplinary courts which issued sentences that did not constitute a deterrent. In his view, numerous Palestinians did not file complaints because the sentences could not be considered as deterrents. MK Tufik Katib stated that the Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Division did not enjoy credibility among Palestinians, who therefore were reluctant to complain about ill-treatment and violent behaviour by policemen. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 21 November)

147. On 21 November, four additional border policemen were indicted by the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court on charges of aggravated assault and abuse of power in the beating of a Palestinian resident of Hebron. The four were accused of stopping the Palestinian while on patrol in the Ramot settlement in Jerusalem in June and beating him when he failed to produce an entry permit to Israel. According to the charge sheet, the policemen ordered the Palestinian into their jeep and drove to a nearby grove, kicking him all the time. When they arrived at the grove, they pulled him from the jeep and beat him again. It was indicated in the charge sheet that defendant 2 hit the plaintiff with his nightstick and defendant 3 or 4 ordered the plaintiff to spread his legs and then kicked him in the groin. The plaintiff fell to the ground and defendants 2, 3, and 4 continued to beat him. Defendant 1 took his nightstick and hit the plaintiff on the head. The charge sheet continued that one of the four had hit the Palestinian so hard with his nightstick that it broke and he lost consciousness. The policemen left the bruised and scarred Palestinian lying on the ground. A passer-by discovered him and called for help. (Jerusalem Post, 25 November)

148. On 21 November, a Palestinian from Dura village who was arrested in Beer Sheva on suspicion of staying in Israel illegally charged that after being held for long hours in an improvised lock-up at the local police station, he was beaten by a border policeman because he had asked for some water. The Palestinian, who had red marks on his face, described the incident to

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journalists who had come to the Beer Sheva police station in order to report on the arrest of some 100 Palestinians who were in Israel illegally. When the policeman heard that the detainee had complained about him to the journalists, he ordered him to accompany him into the station. After an hour, the Palestinian came out with clear marks of violence on his face. Answering journalists' questions about the marks on his face, the detainee stated: "I am afraid, nothing happened, no one hit me, leave me alone". Later, the Palestinian spoke in Arabic with the other detainees and stated that he was told that if he complained again, he would be taken to an isolated place where he would be "liquidated". An internal border police committee was appointed to investigate the incident. (Ha'aretz, 22 November)

149. On 22 November, it was reported that Israeli television had broadcast a few days earlier an amateur video film of Israeli soldiers beating Palestinians at a Jerusalem checkpoint. The film showed two Israeli soldiers severely beating and humiliating six Palestinians at the A-Ram checkpoint. The two soldiers were seen repeatedly slapping the men, sitting on their heads and kicking them in the testicles. The 45-minute footage was caught by chance by a Palestinian who happened to be in the vicinity. The Israeli Internal Security Minister, Avigdor Kahalani, announced that the two soldiers had been suspended and would appear before a criminal court. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 November)

150. On 26 November, Attorney-General Michael Ben Yair sent a letter to Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani stating that violence against Arabs by the border police was the rule rather than the exception. Ben Yair based his conclusions on data emanating from the Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Division and a discussion with senior ministry, police and border police officials. "I was convinced that this is indeed a serious and widespread phenomenon", he wrote. "The cumulative experience of the investigators and attorneys shows that we are talking about a phenomenon, rather than exceptional cases". Ben Yair noted that 324 complaints were filed against border policemen for violence in 1995, and 264 in 1996. Of these, 21 resulted in criminal indictments in 1995 and 21 in 1996. In total, 29 cases in 1995 and 14 in 1996 resulted in disciplinary charges. Charges were found baseless in 44 cases in 1995 and 25 in 1996. However, the vast majority of cases were closed because of difficulties in collecting evidence. The victims were often not the ones who filed complaints, owing in part to the fact that many Arabs from the territories could not enter Israel. Often, either the victims could not be found or the policemen could not be identified. Ben Yair added that in a professional's opinion, the change in the proportions between disciplinary and criminal indictments was an indication of a worsening in the level of violence. "All this", observed Ben Yair, "paints a sad and sorry picture of a deep-rooted tradition of violence towards Arabs, just because they are Arabs. There are those who say that this phenomenon exists, though to a lesser degree, in other security services". (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 27 November)

151. On 29 November, it was reported that a group of border guards remanded amateur photographer Azzam Maraga for 48 hours. Maraga, who had videotaped the incident in which soldiers were mistreating Palestinians, was taken for interrogation at the Russian compound. The border guards attacked Maraga's brothers, who tried to interfere, causing bone fractures in one of the brothers. In another development, an inquiry at a district court in Jerusalem revealed

that four other border guards, using truncheons, had beaten Fadi Shawar, a Palestinian labourer, and had left him unconscious in the woods north of Jerusalem. Shawar did not have a permit to work in Jerusalem. The incident occurred on 30 June 1996. It was further revealed that the border guards belonged to the same unit as those who beat up the Palestinian labourer at the A-Ram checkpoint in October 1996. (The Jerusalem Times, 29 November)

152. On 2 December, the human rights organization B'tselem released a report entitled "Sexual harassment in the name of law". The report provided details about seven recent cases in Hebron in which Israeli policewomen ordered Palestinian women and girls to undress in their homes for strip searches while they were looking for weapons. In one instance, a male policeman entered a bedroom where a woman sat naked. In other cases policewomen hit women who refused to be searched. In two cases, women were compelled to strip in front of their children. In no cases were men ordered to strip, raising questions about the whole purpose of the search. During the searches, property was heavily damaged, furniture was broken, food was thrown on the floor and mattresses and clothes were torn. In several cases, the searches were accompanied by threats against the Palestinians. Practically none of those searched were detained and few weapons were found. (Ha'aretz, 2 December; Jerusalem Post, 3 December)

153. On 10 December, the head of the Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Department, lawyer Eran Shendar, revealed that in the course of 1996, there had been cases of abuse of Palestinians by border policemen which were much more serious than the cases aired on television recently. Lawyer Shendar stressed that such cases of violence by the border police against Palestinians were not exceptional. According to the lawyer, since the beginning of the year, 264 files had been opened against border policemen for the use of force while on duty. It was decided to try 35 policemen (criminal charge sheets were filed against 21 policemen while the rest were tried in disciplinary courts). "I have no doubt", Shendar stated, "that if the same border policemen who had ill-treated the Palestinians had seen a Jewish offender, they would not have treated him in the same manner". Shendar expressed belief that the behaviour of border policemen towards Palestinians was a result of their feeling that it was "permitted to spill the blood of Arabs". (Ha'aretz, 10 December)

154. On 18 December, the B'tselem human rights organization issued a second report on strip searches of Palestinian women in Hebron. The report, which was prompted by the continuation of strip searches, charged that over the past three weeks security forces in Hebron had subjected 15 women to full strip searches, sometimes in front of their children, in what appeared to be intentional humiliation of the women and their families. The searches, ostensibly for weapons, took place between 27 November and 11 December, and the women concerned were aged 20 to 69. Thirteen babies and children were also subjected to strip searches. In two cases, a male policeman was present during the strip search. The order to strip was accompanied more than once by shouting, verbal abuse and threats. One 46-year-old woman who was seven months pregnant stated that a policewoman had ordered her to strip while another one pointed a gun at her. The strip search was carried out in front of the woman's two sisters, two sisters-in-law and her 14-year-old daughter. Afterwards, the other women were also stripped naked. At the end of the search, the policemen threw the entire contents of their closets on the ground. The police response to the B'tselem

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report cited several instances of searches of Palestinian homes in Hebron which involved police officers and security forces who used force and caused damage, but did not comment on the strip searches. The Judea and Samaria (West Bank) police spokesman described the earlier report by B'tselem as "lies". (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 19 December)

155. On 19 December, B'tselem charged that police had strip-searched three more women in Hebron. The women, aged 17 to 49, and their children were compelled by four policewomen to undress in each other's presence. In one case, a woman with a bandaged hand was slapped on the face when she refused to undress. The woman was also forced to remove her bandage. The same woman stated that her father had been pushed to the ground and beaten by four policemen. Police denied one charge of strip-searching and ignored the others. They referred the complainants to the Justice Ministry's police investigation department. (Jerusalem Post, 20 December; Ha'aretz, 23 December)

(b) Collective punishment

(i) Houses or rooms that were demolished or sealed

156. On 16 October, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert stated that his municipality would continue to demolish homes built illegally in East Jerusalem despite the international outcry that such actions had sparked off in the past. Speaking to reporters during a tour of the city with the Chief of General Staff, Mr. Olmert specified that the municipality had documented thousands of such homes and indicated that as soon as the legal proceedings against those who had built illegally were completed, the municipality would proceed with the demolitions. In a related development, city planners disclosed that the construction of the proposed East Jerusalem beltway, which the municipality had been pushing for several years, would entail the demolition of some 40 Palestinian homes. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 17 October)

157. On 25 November, five Palestinian residents of Halhoul (Hebron area) appealed to the High Court of Justice to prevent the security forces from demolishing their homes. The petitioners also requested the Court to issue an interim order forbidding the demolition of their homes pending final deliberations on their appeal. The demolition orders were reportedly issued on the grounds that the houses were located in the area of Road 60, where construction was prohibited. According to the petition, however, the houses were built prior to the paving of the road. The petition claimed that the demolition of the houses would leave the families, who had many children, with no roof over their heads. A lawyer from the Palestinian Association for Human Rights and the Environment who represented the residents indicated that the families had no other property and that they had serious financial difficulties because of the closure. The lawyer indicated further that under Jordanian law, which was in force in the area, authorities were allowed to demolish a house only if its construction violated a detailed master plan. There was no such plan for the area in question. The lawyer continued that the area where the houses were located was previously designated for habitation. However, in 1982 the military government prepared a new master plan for Halhoul which reduced the municipality's boundaries by 45 per cent. The land belonging to the five petitioners was among that taken from the town. The area was designated as an

agricultural area where construction was prohibited. However, the lawyer claimed that construction permits had been issued to all Jewish settlements located in the same area. In addition, the lawyer charged that Road 60 had been built only for the benefit of the settlers. The lawyer concluded that the demolition orders against the houses along the road were aimed at preventing the expansion of Halhoul and keeping its land for settlers. (Ha'aretz, 26 November)

(ii) Imposition of curfews, sealing off or closing of areas

158. On 24 September, hundreds of Palestinians demonstrated at the entrance to Hebron's wholesale market, demanding that the market, which was closed after the 1994 Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) massacre, be reopened for commerce. The protesters were led by Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe, the Palestinian Authority Higher Education Minister, Hanan Ashrawi, and by the Hebron area mufti. Dozens of settlers also arrived on the scene and threw stones at the protesters, who tried to enter the market but were prevented from doing so by IDF forces. Four Palestinians were detained on suspicion of stone-throwing. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 September)

159. On 24 September, a group of some 25 Peace Now activists staged a demonstration at the entrance to the new Jerusalem-Gush Etzion road in order to protest against the closure of the road to Palestinian traffic. The demonstrators carried signs reading "Apartheid Road" and "No peace at the end of the tunnel". (Jerusalem Post, 25 September)

160. On 25 September, a closure was imposed on the territories following numerous violent clashes between IDF troops and Palestinians protesting against the opening of the Hashmonean Tunnel in Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 26 September; Jerusalem Post, 27 September)

161. On 25 September, dozens of Palestinians demonstrated at the Netzarim junction against the closure of the Gaza-Khan Younis road and also clashed with soldiers. (Ha'aretz, 26 September)

162. On 26 September, a curfew was imposed on Hebron in the wake of violent clashes between residents and IDF troops. Several other West Bank towns were placed under curfew and several villages were sealed off. (Ha'aretz, 27 September)

163. On 26 September, the city of Hebron was placed under a strict curfew. Palestinians have also been prevented from leaving their cities and villages. (The Jerusalem Times, 4 October)

164. On 28 September, the IDF imposed a closure on all West Bank cities. In addition, a curfew was imposed on the Fawar refugee camp and on Beit Ummar village. (Ha'aretz, 29 September)

165. On 29 September, in addition to imposing a full closure of the territories, the IDF reportedly launched an operation dubbed "Operation Field of Thorns", which sealed off all Palestinian-controlled cities and imposed curfews on Arab villages inside areas controlled by Israel. As part of the operation, the IDF also strengthened its forces in the territories where it deployed snipers,

tanks, heavy weapons and Cobra attack helicopters in order to prevent further disturbances. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 30 September)

166. On 29 September, dozens of Palestinian youths violated the curfew imposed on Hebron on 26 September, setting up barricades in the streets and throwing stones. They were dispersed by IDF soldiers who detained one youth. (Ha'aretz, 30 September)

167. On 1 October, IDF soldiers detained dozens of Palestinians who had ignored the curfew in Hebron. The arrests were made as settler children turned the town's deserted streets into a playground. One 60-year-old Palestinian stated that his 15-year-old son was arrested as he crossed the threshold of his home and stepped into the front yard. The Palestinian told a Reuter's reporter that the arrest was a provocation and that the residents were in a detention camp while settlers could walk freely in Palestinian streets and Palestinians were prohibited by IDF soldiers from even looking out of their windows. Palestinians reportedly flocked into the town's fruit and vegetable markets during a four-hour suspension of the military curfew in order to buy supplies, should the curfew continue. Hebron was reported to be the only Palestinian town under a complete curfew, with a four-hour break from dawn to 8 a.m. Apart from a few shops which were opened during those hours, businesses were closed and children did not go to school. Elsewhere in the territories, most residents were also confined to the areas where they lived as a double row of IDF and Palestinian checkpoints created a no-man's land on the outskirts of the main towns, where IDF tanks were positioned in readiness. In some towns, Palestinian policemen sat in fortified bunkers overlooking Israeli positions, while IDF soldiers were in new guard towers overlooking the towns. In Tulkarm, the security authorities reportedly started to erect high fences and front-line command posts, which, according to a senior army officer, were similar to those existing in Lebanon. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 2 October)

168. On 2 October, the security authorities lifted the "internal closures" which were imposed on the territories. The curfews imposed on the Kalandia and Hizma villages in the Ramallah district were also lifted. In addition, it was decided to ease several restrictions on the import of food and medical supplies into the territories and the entry of patients into Israel for treatment. (Ha'aretz, 3 October)

169. On 2 October, traffic came to a halt in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for five minutes in a show of support for the Palestinian Authority and in protest against the closure. (Jerusalem Post, 3 October)

170. On 3 October, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai convened a meeting of high-ranking security commanders in order to assess the situation in the territories. He decided to ease gradually the closure that had kept nearly one million Palestinians confined to their towns and villages. To begin with, he ordered that tanks pull away from the outskirts of Palestinian towns and return to nearby bases. He also eased the internal closure imposed on the Bethlehem district. Sources in the Defence Ministry stated that Mr. Mordechai wanted to open gradually the Palestinian-controlled areas and allow for more goods to be imported and exported into the autonomous zone. The sources stressed that all

moves would be made in function of security considerations. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 4 October)

171. On 5 October, some 50 Peace Now activists, writers and intellectuals visited Hebron to protest against the 10-day curfew which had been in force in the city since the recent violence in the territories. Peace Now, which organized the visit at the invitation of Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe, charged that the curfew had been extended only in order to keep Jewish settlers and visitors safe. Novelist David Grossman stated that the group had come to show solidarity with the Palestinians who were under curfew. Mr. Grossman told Palestinian residents that he was ashamed that they had been imprisoned in their homes so that the settlers could hold their celebration outside. (Jerusalem Post, 6 October)

172. On 5 October, the army eased the internal closure imposed on the Jenin and Bethlehem districts. It also lifted for a number of hours the curfew in Hebron and the villages of Beit Omar, El Arub and Hawarta in order to enable the residents to stock up on food. The internal closure of Palestinian-controlled areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was still in force, however, barring over two million Palestinians from entering Israel. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 6 October)

173. On 6 October, the security authorities lifted the internal closure imposed on Hebron, Jericho and the villages in the Jenin and Tulkarm areas. It was reported that almost all of the internal closures which were imposed 11 days earlier had been completely lifted. In a related development, the IDF allowed foodstuffs to enter the Gaza Strip through the Karni checkpoint. (Ha'aretz, 7 October)

174. On 7 October, the internal closure imposed on Tulkarm and Kalkiliya was lifted. (Ha'aretz, 8 October)

175. On 11 October, dozens of Meretz and Palestinian activists staged a joint march through the streets of Bethlehem, despite the fact that the city remained "a closed military zone". The participants carried a large banner displaying the Israeli and Palestinian flags and reading "Two states, two peoples - one future". The Mayor of Bethlehem stated that the two peoples had no other choice but to live together and protested against the closure policy, which prevented residents from reaching Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 13 October)

176. On 11 October, it was reported that the siege of the city of Nablus had entered its third week. (The Jerusalem Times, 11 October)

177. On 15 October, after 20 days, the security authorities lifted the internal closure imposed on Nablus. The internal closure of the city was the last one to be in force in the territories. (Ha'aretz, 16 October; also referred to in The Jerusalem Times, 18 October)

178. On 15 October, it was reported that B'tselem had demanded that the OC of Central Command, General Uzi Dayan, remove the cement roadblocks from the entrance to a neighbourhood of Beit Jala. The roadblocks, which were erected 12 days earlier, prevented vehicles from entering the neighbourhood where 150

Israeli Arabs, foreign residents and Palestinians from the territories resided. As a result, garbage could not be collected and residents could not receive gas supplies or goods, or benefit from any other services. In addition, the residents, who were forced to walk approximately one kilometre in order to reach the main road, complained that the roadblocks prevented rescue teams from reaching the neighbourhood in cases of emergency. (Ha'aretz, 15 October)

179. On 23 October, Israel imposed an open-ended closure on the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip and placed its security forces on an especially high level of alert amid warnings that Islamic Jihad would stage a suicide attack at the end of the month to mark the anniversary of the assassination of its leader, Fathi Shakaki. During the indefinite closure, all Palestinians were barred from entering Israel. However, Palestinian leaders, 270 medical personnel working in East Jerusalem and urgent humanitarian cases would be allowed in, provided that they had the approval of the Government Coordinator of Activities in the Territories. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 24 October)

180. On 24 October, the Israeli authorities announced a full closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip until further notice. (The Jerusalem Times, 25 October)

181. On 29 October, the IDF imposed a curfew on Husan village following clashes between soldiers and youths who were protesting against the beating to death of a Palestinian boy by a Jewish settler. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 30 October)

182. On 5 November, the IDF lifted the closure it had imposed on Jenin and Jericho following the riots in the territories in September. (Ha'aretz, 6 November)

183. On 9 November, an IDF spokesman announced that 35,000 married Palestinian workers over the age of 30 would be allowed to enter Israel as of the following day. The spokesman stated that 20,000 of the workers would be from the West Bank and the remainder from the Gaza Strip. The spokesman also announced that the Karni crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip would be opened to imports and exports without restriction and that the transfer of merchandise from Gaza to Jordan would be allowed. (Ha'aretz, 11 November; Jerusalem Post, 10 and 11 November)

184. On 16 November, the IDF further eased the closure of the territories by increasing the number of work permits for Palestinians by another 15,000 (8,000 workers from the West Bank and 7,000 from the Gaza Strip), thus bringing to 50,000 the total number of Palestinian workers allowed into Israel. In addition, 500 additional Palestinian merchants were allowed into Israel for business purposes, thus bringing to 2,250 the number of Palestinian merchants allowed into the country every day. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 17 November)

185. On 18 November, several villages in the Hebron area were placed under curfew during a large-scale search operation in the region. (Ha'aretz, 19 November)

186. On 11 December, the IDF imposed an internal closure on Ramallah and the surrounding area until further notice following a "terrorist" attack in which a woman settler and her son were killed near Beit El. The closure was lifted on

17 December. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 12 and 18 December; also referred to in The Jerusalem Times, 13 December)

187. On 22 December, the IDF imposed a curfew on the casbah in Hebron following the throwing of three incendiary bottles at Israeli targets in the area. The curfew was lifted on 24 December. (Ha'aretz, 25 and 26 December; Jerusalem Post, 26 December)

188. On 25 December, the IDF imposed a curfew on the area of the casbah in Hebron following an incident in which three firebombs were thrown at settlers and soldiers. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 26 December)

189. On 26 December, the IDF opened the Netzarim road to Palestinian traffic. The opening of the road did not give rise to any disturbances or demonstrations by settlers. (Ha'aretz, 27 December)

190. On 26 December, the IDF imposed a curfew on the Beit Hadassah area in Hebron following the throwing of an incendiary bottle there. The IDF also ordered merchants in the area to close their shops. The merchants expressed their frustration over the daily closure of their businesses. (Ha'aretz, 27 December)

(iii) Other forms of collective punishment

191. On 22 December, the IDF ordered merchants in the area of the Hebron market to close their shops following an incident in which an incendiary bottle was thrown at an IDF outpost near Beit Hadassah. (Ha'aretz, 23 December)

(c) Expulsions

192. No information was available.

(d) Economic and social situation

193. On 25 September, a commercial strike was carried out in Jerusalem in response to a call by the Palestinian Authority to protest the opening of a tunnel in the vicinity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September)

194. On 2 October, it was reported that the areas under the Palestinian Authority had begun to suffer from shortages of fuel, gas and dairy products owing to the continuing curfew imposed by Israel. Reserves of basic foods were expected to run out by the end of the week. (The Jerusalem Times, 4 October)

195. On 3 October, Israel allowed 50 empty trucks to cross the Erez checkpoint in order to load food supplies in Israel and return to the Gaza Strip. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 4 October)

196. On 4 October, it was reported that a total closure had been in force in the Gaza Strip since 30 September, with Israel banning the import of food supplies through the crossings of Karni, Rafah and Erez (90 per cent of food supplies and raw materials are imported into the Gaza Strip from or through Israel).

Shortages of fresh dairy products were already being felt, and provisions of refrigerated fruit and vegetables were also running out. Import of raw materials from Israel and the port of Ashdod has been suspended completely, as was the case with the supply of fuel and domestic gas. Contractors reported shortages of cement and gravel. The export of Gazan produce, in particular agricultural produce mainly destined for the West Bank, was prohibited for a week. On 2 October, Israel allowed farmers to export several truckloads of guavas. However, Palestinian sources reported that the trucks were delayed at the roadblock for too long and had to turn back since the fruit was no longer fit for export. The Israeli authorities allowed 50 trucks to leave for the port of Ashdod. However, according to Palestinian sources the announcement of the authorization was received late at night, thus preventing numerous merchants and drivers from coordinating their purchases. The income loss incurred by the 19,000 labourers who used to work in Israel has triggered a recession which was felt in economic activities in Gaza. Inside the Gaza Strip, an internal closure was imposed on the Muasi region, an agricultural area west of Khan Younis where the Gush Katif settlements are located. Palestinian residents, including patients, were prohibited from using the direct route to Khan Younis, only a five-minute drive away. They were allowed to cross and export produce to local markets only through Rafah, which prolongs the journey considerably. The Mayor and the Governor of Khan Younis were also barred from entering the Muasi area through an IDF roadblock located at the entrance to Khan Younis near the Neveh Dekalim settlement. In addition, only six doctors and two paramedics were allowed to enter the area for one and a half hours to examine patients. Some 300 pupils from Khan Younis were prevented from attending school for a week. Concerning entry into Israel, only patients with urgent medical problems such as heart disease or cancer were allowed in. Numerous other patients who had appointments for treatment in Israel or East Jerusalem were not allowed to leave, and the families of patients hospitalized outside the Gaza Strip were not allowed to visit their relatives. (Ha'aretz, 4 October)

197. On 6 October, the Mayor of Bethlehem and the Minister for Tourism of the Palestinian Authority, Elias Freij, accused Israel of causing severe damage to the Palestinian tourist industry. Mr. Freij called for a meeting with his Israeli counterpart in order to discuss both the problem of Christian tourists and pilgrims who wished to visit the city as well as the general crisis concerning tourism. A week and a half before, Bethlehem and other West Bank cities under Palestinian control were declared closed military zones by the IDF. Tourists wishing to visit Bethlehem had to leave their buses before the Gilo roadblock at the northern entrance to the city and walk several hundred metres to the other side of the roadblock, where they were picked up by Palestinian buses. Mr. Freij and Israeli tourist guides claimed that the new arrangements had had a very adverse effect on tourism in the area. (Ha'aretz, 7 October)

198. On 7 October, it was reported that the Association of Physicians for Human Rights had sent first-aid and emergency equipment to the Muhammed Ali Muhtasab Children's Hospital in Hebron and to the Union of Health Workers' Committees in Beit Sahur. The consignment, worth thousands of shekels, was financed by private contributions from Israel and contained infusions, antibiotics and disinfectants. The Association was also preparing a shipment of milk powder to the Hebron area following a report of severe shortages of milk. In a report released on 7 October, the Association stated that the internal closure imposed

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on the West Bank had harmed not only seriously ill patients who were detained at roadblocks but also patients undergoing prolonged or preventive treatment in village clinics, in hospitals in East Jerusalem and in medical institutes in general. The director of the Saint John Ophthalmological Hospital in East Jerusalem reported that since the outbreak of violence in the territories on 25 September, the hospital had treated eight patients with eye injuries caused by rubber bullets and clubs. Only one of the eight came from a locality outside Jerusalem. The Association of Physicians for Human Rights stated that considering the total number of casualties in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, it seemed that numerous people who needed advanced or urgent eye treatment were prevented from reaching the hospital, the only one of its kind in the territories. (Ha'aretz, 7 October)

199. On 9 October, it was reported that as a result of the closure a number of businesses in Gaza had closed and that all textile exports had been suspended. In addition, 800 containers of various raw materials and imported merchandise were blocked in the ports of Ashdod and Haifa for lack of authorization to bring them into the autonomous areas. (Ha'aretz, 9 October)

200. On 11 October, it was reported that the city of Nablus had been isolated completely from the rest of the West Bank for the third consecutive week. Students were prevented from reaching the Al-Najah University. Commercial activity in Nablus had been seriously disrupted. (The Jerusalem Times, 11 October)

201. On 13 October, the Minister of Labour of the Palestinian Authority received 3,814 new work permits from the Israeli authorities, bringing to 8,282 the total number of permits received so far for workers from the Palestinian territories working within the Green Line. (The Jerusalem Times, 18 October)

202. On 13 October, it was reported that it had become clear that with each subsequent lifting of the closure numerous Israeli employers had decided to stop hiring Palestinians because of their frequent and unexpected absences from work. (Ha'aretz, 13 October)

203. On 18 October, a report by the Palestinian news agency Wafa revealed that while Israel had announced that it had issued 35,000 work permits for Palestinians who wanted to work in Israel, only 3,000 workers had crossed the border at one point while another 2,000 had gone to work in the Erez industrial area. The report indicated that the siege of Gaza had been lifted partially in order to allow some movement of goods and people between Gaza and Israel. In a separate development, several workers complained that even though they carried permits to work in Israel, soldiers either tore up their permits or prevented them from entering Israel. Or, if they did manage to reach their workplaces inside Israel, police harassed them on charges of entering Israel without a permit. Reports indicated that the army had interfered in daily life in several West Bank cities and prevented farmers from reaching their fields and picking their crops. (The Jerusalem Times, 18 October)

204. On 1 November, the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories issued a statement in Gaza claiming that the real national income of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was estimated to have declined by nearly

23 per cent between 1992 and 1996. Average unemployment during the same period rose from under 10 per cent to a current rate of about 30 per cent. Real wages of the average employed Palestinian had fallen by some 20 per cent since late 1995. Higher rates of unemployment and lower wages had led to a 10 per cent decline in average household consumption since the end of 1995. Households compensated for this decline with greater labour market effort, reductions in savings and increased borrowing. According to the statement, closures of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that had barred Palestinians from their jobs in Israel played an important role in the deterioration of the economic situation. The report explained that the closures had been particularly important in determining labour and commodity mobility, economic growth rates, labour market conditions and therefore family standards of living. (Jerusalem Post, 3 November)

205. On 10 November, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat told Histadrut (the Israeli General Federation of Labour) Chairman Amir Peres that the Palestinian Authority had incurred an average daily loss of $9 million as a result of the closure. Mr. Peres stated that a 60 per cent unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip and the autonomous areas had adversely affected the whole region and not only Palestinians. He pointed out that a political agreement could halt missiles and tanks but not a hungry man. (Ha'aretz, 11 November)

206. On 22 December, the Association of Physicians for Human Rights appealed to the High Court of Justice to order the IDF to establish and publish compulsory rules concerning the entry of Palestinian patients from the territories into Israel. The Association requested that each response to an entry application be justified in writing and that regular appeal procedures be established. The Association claimed that the failure of the IDF to establish such rules was against the Hague Conventions, according to which an occupying Power had to allow patients from occupied territories to receive urgent medical treatment in other areas. The Association pointed out that since the imposition of the permanent closure on the territories in 1993, it had dealt with thousands of requests by patients who needed to enter Israel for medical treatment. The Association stated that no one knew the rules according to which the IDF defined requests as urgent. In addition, decisions to grant permits were frequently arbitrary and accidental. The Association cited as an example the case of a 16-year-old girl from Gaza whose request to enter Israel for urgent heart surgery was rejected. The rejection was not accompanied by a reasonable explanation. The girl was allowed to enter the country only after the Association intervened on her behalf. A similar case was that of a three-year-old child from the Gaza Strip who also needed to undergo urgent heart surgery in Israel but was allowed to enter the country only after the Association intervened. The Association claimed that the establishment of clear rules would have prevented the death of babies at roadblocks and delays in dialytic and X-ray treatment for patients from the Gaza Strip. (Ha'aretz, 23 December)

207. On 24 December, it was reported that the Christmas atmosphere in Bethlehem was very different from the euphoria that had prevailed in the town in 1995 following the withdrawal of the IDF. The authorities reportedly suffered from a cash crisis, which meant that they had difficulty finding funds to pay for fireworks, decorations, cleaning, road repairs and the thousands of coloured

light bulbs used to adorn the city for the celebrations of the Christmas Eve midnight Mass. (Jerusalem Post, 24 December)

208. On 27 December, it was reported that the director of the Palestinian Authority's Health Ministry, Dr. Imad Trawiya, had informed the Association of Physicians for Human Rights that a rift had existed between the health ministries of the Palestinian Authority and Israel since the change of Government in Israel. Dr. Trawiya complained that instead of discussing joint projects with Israel, the Palestinians should discuss the issue of entry permits for patients. Dr. Njar, the Palestinian representative to the joint appeals committees, reported on special difficulties in transferring patients from Gaza to hospitals in East Jerusalem. For example, he indicated that patients requiring eye treatment at the Saint John Ophthalmological Hospital in East Jerusalem had not been given permits to enter Israel for the past six months. According to figures submitted to the Association of Physicians for Human Rights, of a total of 400 applications for permits submitted in September, only 250 were approved, compared with 276 of 386 requests approved in October. In other words, approximately one third of the Palestinians referred by Palestinian health committees could not obtain permits to enter Israel. (Ha'aretz, 27 December)

(e) Other developments

209. On 24 September, it was reported that OC Central Command General Uzi Dayan had signed a six-month closure order concerning two charity organizations in Hebron on the ground that they were affiliated with Hamas. (Ha'aretz, 24 September)

210. On 10 October, the Israeli human rights organization B'tselem accused the Israeli police of firing live ammunition at worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque during Friday prayers on 27 September. A B'tselem inquiry ascertained that none of the policemen were in danger when they opened fire. The detailed report contained the testimony of eyewitnesses and the wounded. Shrapnel removed from the body of a wounded man, Amman Siam, 23, was found to have come from a live bullet. B'tselem added that the police had also fired rubber bullets at close range. A large number of the wounded had been hit in the head and chest at a distance of less than 40 yards, in violation of regulations concerning the use of rubber bullets. A Palestinian, Jawad Bazlameet, was killed when a rubber bullet struck him in the head and penetrated his skull. B'tselem also reported that the Israeli authorities had prevented Palestinian medical teams and ambulances from entering the Holy Compound. They were forced to wait for more than an hour and a half before they were allowed into the compound. (The Jerusalem Times, 11 October)

211. On 18 October, dozens of members of the Meretz Party marched together with scores of residents of Ramallah from the Jerusalem-Ramallah road to the El-Bireh municipality. At the municipality, the almost 120 participants held a news conference in which representatives of the Palestine Council from Ramallah, the head of Fatah in the territories and the Ramallah area security chief took part; Knesset member Dedi Zucker, who also participated, told the rally that the Meretz delegation wanted to show its solidarity with the residents of El-Bireh

and Ramallah by joining in the protest against the continuing delays in implementing the peace process. (Jerusalem Post, 20 October)

212. On 18 October, it was reported that houses in the Bethlehem area were in danger of being flooded with mud owing to a decision of the Israeli authorities to pave a new circular road in the Bir Awnah area, north of Beit Jala. The Israeli authorities had piled the soil up higher than the houses. (The Jerusalem Times, 18 October)

213. On 25 October, it was reported that 42 of the Palestinians who were injured during the recent events were still receiving treatment in the hospitals of Gaza and the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority's Minister of Health, Dr. Riyad Al-Zaanoun, stated that three of the injured remained in critical condition. The Minister criticized as inhumane the Israeli policy of delaying the issuing of permits to patients who had been referred to hospitals in Israel, East Jerusalem or Jordan. (The Jerusalem Times, 25 October)

214. On 29 October, unofficial Palestinian sources reported that the IDF had planted mines around the IDF outpost at the Netzarim junction (Gaza Strip). Commenting on the charge, an IDF spokesman stated that the IDF did not provide information on the deployment of its forces or weapons. As to whether there were any warning signs in the area, the spokesman responded that the outpost was surrounded by several fences and that a person who did not cross them was not exposed to any danger. (Ha'aretz, 30 October)

215. On 1 November, the Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine claimed that during a sermon he delivered at the Al-Aqsa Mosque Israeli doctors were encouraging pregnant Palestinian women to have abortions. According to the Mufti, the doctors, especially religious ones, told pregnant Palestinian women from East Jerusalem that the foetuses in their wombs suffered from diseases or were defective thereby "sowing fear and doubt in their hearts". It later apparently became clear that there was no truth in such statements. The Mufti suggested that such behaviour was aimed at reducing the Palestinian population, and he called on the worshippers not to heed the advice of Israeli doctors and to avoid abortions except in cases in which the woman's life was in danger. (Ha'aretz, 3 November)

216. On 1 November, it was reported that the Islamic waqf in Jerusalem had protested strongly against a new Israeli move in the village of Silwan whereby an organization called the East Jerusalem Development Company started collecting entrance fees from tourists visiting the Silwan Pool. According to waqf officials, the company was connected to the West Jerusalem municipality. The waqf stated that the pool, where Christ is supposed to have healed blind people and lepers, has been the property of Islamic endowment since the early years of Islam. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 November)

217. On 5 November, a report published by the Al-Haq human rights organization indicated that Israeli soldiers had damaged and confiscated property belonging to the Ka'abna and Yattawi families and forcibly evicted them from the area in which they had been living for more than two decades. The two bedouin families were served notices ordering them to evacuate the area near the village of

Ramoun, in the district of Ramallah, on the ground that they were living too near to a closed military area. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 November)

218. On 26 November, the Palestinian Authority agreed to allow Israel to place two caravans next to the Nabi Yusef shrine in Nablus in order to replace the structures torched by Palestinian demonstrators during the September clashes. (The Jerusalem Times, 29 November)

219. On 2 December, the police closed the offices in Umm al-Fahm and Nazareth of two relief organizations suspected of providing assistance to families of Hamas activists believed to have been involved in planning or carrying out "terrorist" attacks. The closure of the Humanitarian Aid Association's two offices in Umm al-Fahm and of another office in Nazareth was carried out on orders issued by OC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Amiram Levine. The relief organizations were officially listed as non-profit associations that raised funds to provide aid to needy families in the territories. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 3 December)

220. On 13 December, it was reported that the Consul-General of the United States of America in Jerusalem had accused Israel of pursuing a policy of discrimination against Americans of Palestinian origin who were residents of Jerusalem. They were being forced to choose between the right of residency in the city and their United States citizenship. The Consul-General indicated that he knew of 60 such cases. He added that several persons in this situation hesitated to leave for the United States, in some cases to visit dying relatives, for fear of losing their right of return. (The Jerusalem Times, 13 December)

221. On 16 December, the Israeli Ministry of the Interior refused to renew the residency permits of women from East Jerusalem who were married to Jordanian citizens. Visas issued to the Jordanian husbands were also invalidated. Ministry officials indicated that couples whose applications for family reunion had been denied should leave the city within 15 days. (The Jerusalem Times, 20 December)

222. On 24 December, at the High Court of Justice, the Interior Ministry undertook to establish within three or four months a new procedure regarding requests by Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem to obtain new identity cards to replace lost cards. The judges took note of a statement by the Interior Ministry's representative that pending the establishment of a new procedure, Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem who wished to obtain new identity cards would not be obliged to present a certificate from a judge stating that their card had been lost or stolen. Instead, the Ministry would accept declarations made before a Ministry employee. (Ha'aretz, 25 December)

2. Measures affecting certain fundamental freedoms

(a) Freedom of movement

223. On 29 September, six cancer patients, two heart patients in need of urgent treatment, and two children in need of dialysis were not allowed to cross from Gaza to Israel, in violation of an earlier pledge by the security authorities

that cancer patients and those in need of dialysis would be authorized to enter the country. The two ambulances, which were to transfer the patients to East Jerusalem and Israel for urgent treatment, were stopped at the Erez checkpoint. Appeals by Palestinian health officials to the Liaison Bureau in Gaza went unanswered. According to the Association of Physicians for Human Rights, patients had not been allowed to cross into Israel for approximately one month as a result of the Gaza Liaison Bureau's independent policy. In a related development, it was reported that medical institutions in the West Bank had to function with reduced personnel because of the internal closure. The Association appealed to the OC of IDF troops in the West Bank demanding that medical teams be allowed to move freely within the West Bank. The Association expressed its fears that the impact of the current closure would be similar to that of the previous closure imposed in March when, according to figures of the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Health, 60 per cent of the health workers could not reach their workplaces, 70 per cent of the health system was paralysed and 245 village clinics were closed. (Ha'aretz, 30 September)

224. On 29 September, IDF soldiers prevented a Palestinian woman who was in labour from travelling to a hospital in Nablus. The woman, from the Burin village near Nablus, was forced to give birth at a roadblock in Hawara. The spokesman for the Coordination and Liaison Bureau stated that permits to cross roadblocks were issued in some cases when they were applied for by the Palestinian Authority. Patients who arrived at roadblocks without prior coordination or an application by the Palestinian Authority were not allowed to cross. (Ha'aretz, 30 September)

225. On 2 October, it was reported that Palestinian ambulances were virtually barred from entering Israel, allegedly because of attempts to smuggle people who were not sick into the country. The Association of Physicians for Human Rights complained that genuine patients in urgent need of dialysis were also prevented from entering. (Jerusalem Post, 2 October)

226. On 3 October, patients were allowed to leave the territories for treatment in Israel. In addition, Palestinian officers were allowed to cross from Gaza to the West Bank and vice versa. However, Israel prevented Palestinians from crossing the Allenby (King Hussein) Bridge following their refusal to apply for special travel permits from the Civil Administration. The obligation to apply for such permits was reportedly part of the measures imposed on the territories following the riots there. (Ha'aretz, 4 October)

227. On 6 October, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai decided to allow patients to leave the territories for hospitals in Israel. (Ha'aretz, 7 October)

228. On 7 October, 2,000 Palestinian labourers were allowed to cross into Israel at the Erez checkpoint. (Ha'aretz, 8 October)

229. On 8 October, 700 olive harvesters from the territories were allowed to cross roadblocks in order to reach their workplaces. In addition, the Israeli authorities gave the representatives of the Palestinian Authority exit permits for 50 of the 3,000 registered business owners in the Gaza Strip. (Ha'aretz, 8 October)

230. On 9 October, the security authorities allowed some 10,000 labourers from the territories to enter Israel. In addition, the Karni cargo terminal was reopened and trucks carrying food were able to enter the Gaza Strip. The security authorities decided, however, to maintain the state of emergency declared in the territories by Mr. Mordechai some 12 days earlier following the riots there. According to senior military sources, numerous IDF, police and border police troops remained deployed in the territories. (Ha'aretz, 10 October)

231. On 13 October, Defence Ministry officials stated that it had been agreed in principle to allow 35,000 Palestinian labourers to enter Israel. However, owing to paperwork requirements less than half that number were able to do so. In the Gaza Strip, large numbers of Palestinians came to the Erez checkpoint hoping to obtain permits. The Gaza branch of the office in charge of issuing permits was capable of processing only some 3,000 permits a day, forcing numerous residents to return home empty-handed. The spokesman for the Government Coordinator of Activities in the Territories indicated that the offices in the West Bank were larger and could print more permits than the one in the Gaza Strip. Of the 35,000 permits that were expected to be issued, 25,000 were for the West Bank. The spokesman did not know the total number of Palestinians who had crossed the border in order to work. He indicated that 13,000 workers went to their jobs in Israeli-controlled industrial zones in the territories, in addition to a few hundred who still held valid permits such as medical personnel, merchants and journalists. Finally, the spokesman stressed that not everyone who applied for a permit received one. Applicants had to be married, be 30 or older and have families and a clean security record. Only 50 business owners of the 3,000 registered had entry permits. One business owner complained about the very small number of permits issued and estimated that Israel had granted many permits to labourers for its own benefit while business owners were issued fewer permits since their work generated income for the Palestinian Authority. In a related development, the Karni crossing resumed operating as it had been prior to the imposition of the general closure. Some 200 trucks loaded and unloaded merchandise according to the "back-to-back" method, and a total of 150 Palestinian trucks in 10 convoys were allowed to enter Israel under escort every day. Some 2,700 Gazan trucks were allowed to enter Israel prior to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, the number of trucks allowed to carry the tiles exported from the Gaza Strip into Israel was limited to seven per day, although manufacturers claimed that 25 trucks would have to leave every day if they were to fulfil their orders. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 14 October)

232. On 15 October, it was reported that 20,000 work permits for Israel had been issued to labourers from the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, 10,000 out of 15,000 approved permits had been issued so far. A security source stated that if the situation in the territories continued to be calm, the number of Palestinians allowed to work in Israel would be increased to 50,000 per day. (Ha'aretz, 16 October)

233. On 17 October, 14,000 labourers from the Gaza Strip and 15,000 from the West Bank entered Israel to work. (Ha'aretz, 18 October)

234. On 24 October, the Israeli authorities imposed a full closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip for security reasons. Reports were allegedly received by Israeli security that militant Palestinian groups were preparing for military attacks against Israel. No Palestinian would be allowed to enter Israel, nor would Palestinian goods be able to leave the West Bank or Gaza for Israeli ports. (The Jerusalem Times, 25 October)

235. On 28 October, it was reported that dozens of food-laden trucks were unable to enter the Gaza Strip because the Karni crossing was closed. (Jerusalem Post, 28 October)

236. On 29 October, the director of the Shu'fat-based Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, Shauki el-Issa, appealed to the High Court of Justice to order Defence Minister Mordechai to allow him to leave Bethlehem and go to Ben-Gurion Airport so that he could travel to the United States to get married. Mr. Issa claimed that his permit to enter Israel had been revoked owing to the closure and that the Coordination and Liaison Bureau had refused to accept his explanation that his situation justified the granting of a permit. Mr. Issa's lawyer claimed in the appeal that the refusal to grant his client a permit was arbitrary and not based on security considerations, since he had been issued dozens of permits to enter Israel over the past four years, which proved that the Israeli authorities did not consider him a security threat. (Ha'aretz, 30 October)

237. On 12 November, IDF soldiers prevented the Palestinian Authority's Information Ministry from organizing a tour in the Old City of Hebron for several foreign diplomats and journalists. The head of the Palestinian Authority's Information Ministry stated that the measure was aimed at concealing actions of settlers in the city, while the Mayor of Hebron suggested that the measure was aimed at protecting the diplomats from harassment by settlers. (Ha'aretz, 13 November)

238. On 20 November, Dr. Eyad Sarraj, a prominent human rights activist from Gaza, stated that he had been barred from travelling to a conference in Oslo because the Israeli authorities reportedly considered him a security threat. Dr. Sarraj, a psychiatrist, heads the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme and is also the Commissioner-General of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights. Dr. Sarraj, who also holds British citizenship, was to address a conference at Oslo University on the subject of citizenship and State in the Middle East. (Jerusalem Post, 20 November)

239. On 29 November, it was reported that Israel had prevented Palestinians in the Gaza Strip from commuting along the road that connects the Netzarim junction to the beach. Israel also refused to allow trucks from the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Public Works to deliver materials necessary for road repairs on the highway leading from Netzarim to the entrance of Gaza and to the coastal road running south of Deir al-Balah. The Israeli authorities explained that they had closed the road for security reasons. (The Jerusalem Times, 29 November)

240. On 10 December, it was reported that upon instructions from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, some 120 Palestinian journalists were granted permits to

enter Israel on the condition that their entry be coordinated with the Liaison Bureau. In another development, it was reported that the IDF had decided to allow 300 Christian families from the West Bank to visit their relatives in Israel and East Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 10 December)

(b) Freedom of education

241. On 24 September, it was reported that OC Central Command General Uzi Dayan had signed an eight-day closure order concerning the University and the Polytechnic of Hebron. The Minister of Higher Education of the Palestinian Authority, Hanan Ashrawi, stated that the decision to close the educational institutions was politically motivated and had nothing to do with security considerations. Ms. Ashrawi stated that the University of Hebron and the Hebron Polytechnic were Palestinian higher education institutions and not Muslim ones, as Israel claimed. She pointed out that their closure was part of the collective punishment policy against the Palestinian people. (Ha'aretz, 24 September)

242. On 11 October, it was reported that students of the University of Bethlehem who are holders of Jerusalem identity cards were denied access to their university by the Israeli authorities. The students were threatened with arrest and turned back. (The Jerusalem Times, 11 October)

243. On 9 December, hundreds of Palestinian students defied the closure orders against Hebron University and broke into the university campus in order to resume classes, which had been suspended since March, following the wave of suicide bombings. The closure of the University was preventing some 1,500 students from continuing their higher education. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 10 December)

244. On 9 December, Palestinian students staged a sit-in to protest against the continuing closure of Hebron University, which had been closed since March. (The Jerusalem Times, 13 December)

245. On 10 December, IDF soldiers scuffled with Palestinian students outside the Islamic University in Hebron a day after students occupied the campus in protest against its closure by the army in March, allegedly on the ground that the University was a centre of Hamas militancy. The students, who rallied outside the campus, were angry over the army's denial that it had agreed to hold talks on opening the University within a week. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 11 December)

246. On 10 December, the first meeting of its kind between representatives of the students' union in Israel and student representatives from Gaza was called off at the last moment because of the refusal of the Israeli authorities to issue to the Palestinian representatives permits to enter Tel Aviv. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the plight of some 1,200 students from Gaza who for more than nine months had not been given permits to go from Gaza to educational institutions in the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, 11 December)

247. On 12 December, hundreds of students from Ramallah enrolled at Bir Zeit University were prevented from reaching its premises owing to the closure

imposed on Ramallah in the wake of an attack in which a woman settler and her son were killed. According to sources in the office of the Ramallah district Governor, educational institutions were particularly affected by the measure since the vast majority of cultural and academic activities in the West Bank were concentrated in Ramallah, which is considered the capital of the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, 13 December)

248. On 15 December, the IDF opened two buildings of the Hebron Polytechnic as part of a decision to open the institute gradually. The IDF allowed the opening after the institute's directors pledged to keep law and order on the premises. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 16 December)

249. On 17 December, Palestinian students took to the streets for the fifth consecutive day in order to protest against the continued closure of Hebron University. The IDF declared the quiet street outside the University a closed military zone, compelling the students to walk down a busier intersection where their protest briefly blocked traffic and attracted public attention. When some of the 150 students ignored an order to disperse, soldiers grabbed two of them and tried to push them into military jeeps. Other students and administrative staff intervened when things threatened to become more violent, and the students were released. Students and lecturers also held classes in the open air as part of their protest. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 18 December)

250. On 18 December, the Israeli authorities declared the compound of Hebron University a closed military area following protests by faculty and students the previous week to have the University reopened. (The Jerusalem Times, 20 December)

251. On 24 December, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Hebron University stated that studies were scheduled to resume on 28 December. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 December)

252. On 28 December, Hebron University reopened after being closed for 10 months following a series of suicide bombings in March. University administrators of the 1,600-student institution regarded the closure as unfair, stating that it was largely based on an Israeli perception of Hebron University as a hotbed of Islamic militancy. (Jerusalem Post, 25, 29 December)

(c) Freedom of religion

253. On 24 September, it was reported that the OC of the Central Command had authorized the closure of the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) for Muslim worship during Yom Kippur. (Ha'aretz, 24 September)

254. On 24 September, Jerusalem police chief Arye Amit closed the Temple Mount to Muslim worship following demonstrations against the opening of the Hashmonean tunnel. (Ha'aretz, 25 September)

255. On 27 September, only 8,000 to 10,000 Muslim worshippers came to the Al-Aqsa Mosque for prayers, as compared with some 20,000 who would normally attend on Fridays. Worshippers who arrived complained about being hassled by

the police and claimed that police roadblocks had kept away numerous other Muslims. (Jerusalem Post, 29 September)

256. On 7 October, the Palestinian Authority accused the Israeli authorities of withdrawing the Internet service from Palestinian areas. The lines were all leased from the Israeli telecommunications company Bezeq. Bezeq officials stated that service was withdrawn owing to a technical problem which they could not solve for security reasons. (The Jerusalem Times, 11 October)

257. On 9 October, it was reported that Muslim leaders in Jerusalem had temporarily closed the Temple Mount to all but Muslim worshippers on the ground that the site should not be opened to the public such a short time after three Palestinians had allegedly been killed by police during rioting there two weeks earlier. Waqf officials also stated that the decision had been taken out of fear that extreme right-wing activists disguised as tourists might enter the Temple Mount in order to carry out an attack in the mosque compound. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 9 October)

258. On 12 October, the waqf opened the Temple Mount to visitors following two weeks of closure. In another development, waqf director Adnan Husseini charged that the Hashmonean (or so-called Western Wall) Tunnel was endangering the Muslim structures above it. According to Mr. Husseini, Israel had used chemical materials during the excavation in violation of international law. He further charged that tourists who passed through the tunnel were subjected to what he described as anti-Muslim and anti-Christian propaganda. (Ha'aretz, 13 October)

259. On 13 October, the Israeli authorities resumed work at Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. The Director of the Islamic waqf in the city indicated that there were plans to build a second floor over the Bilal Ben Rabah Mosque as well as to build a wall, to separate the tomb from the main road. The Director added that the excavations made by Israeli bulldozers were affecting the buildings near Rachel's Tomb as well as a Muslim cemetery. (The Jerusalem Times, 18 October)

260. On 18 October, it was reported that Palestinian Christians had vigorously condemned plans by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to open for tourism the site of Christ's baptism on the Jordan River. The site, located near the Saint John Convent to the east of Jericho, is on Palestinian-controlled land. Father George Abu Khazen stated that Christians had not been able to reach the baptismal site for years since it was proclaimed a closed military area. Father Abu Khazen accused Israel of interfering in Christian holy sites. (The Jerusalem Times, 18 October)

261. On 25 October, it was reported that Palestinians had strongly protested against a statement issued by the Israeli High Court which called on the Israeli Government and the municipality of West Jerusalem to increase their surveillance of the Haram al-Sharif area in the Old City of Jerusalem. The statement also called for Israeli law to be enforced there. The Israeli High Court issued a statement a week after it had rejected a petition by Israeli religious groups to close down a part of Al-Aqsa Mosque referred to as the Al-Marwani prayer area. An Israeli religious group, the Temple Mount faithful, also petitioned the High Court two weeks earlier to enforce Israeli building laws within the Al-Haram compound. (The Jerusalem Times, 25 October)

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262. On 27 October, the Israeli Supreme Court decided to allow the Ministry of Defence to conduct excavations in a Muslim graveyard in Jerusalem in order to exhume the bodies of 10 soldiers it claims were buried there during the war of 1948. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 November)

263. On 1 December, 17 yeshiva students armed with machine-guns arrived at the Nabi Yusef shrine in Nablus aboard a military vehicle escorted by a joint Palestinian-Israeli patrol. The Palestinian Authority lodged an official complaint against the reopening of the yeshiva (Jewish religious seminary) at the shrine, arguing that the peace accords allowed Jews to pray at the shrine but not to establish a theological centre there. (The Jerusalem Times, 6 December)

264. On 3 December, an official source from the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Information refuted allegations made by the Israeli Ministry of the Interior, which had accused the Islamic waqf of planning to demolish Jesus' Cradle, located at the underground Marwani prayer site beneath the Al-Aqsa Mosque. (The Jerusalem Times, 6 December)

265. On 10 December, it was reported that as part of measures aimed at easing the closure, the security authorities had decided to allow 300 clergymen to enter Jerusalem in preparation for the Christian holidays, in addition to 400 clergymen whose entry had been approved before. (Ha'aretz, 10 December)

(d) Freedom of expression

266. On 22 October, it was reported that according to Reporters sans frontières, the Paris-based organization for reporters' rights, the IDF shot 11 journalists, three intentionally, during the two days of rioting in the territories in September. The organization noted that all of those wounded by Israeli soldiers on 25 September were hit by rubber bullets, while those hit the following day were injured by live ammunition. (Jerusalem Post, 22 October)

267. On 12 December, police prevented the holding of a conference scheduled to be held in East Jerusalem under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority. The conference, planned to take place on Teacher's Day, was banned one and a half hours before it was to begin on the orders of Interior Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani. (Ha'aretz, 13 December)

3. Information on settlers' activities affecting the civilian population

268. On 27 September, it was reported that armed settlers acting as a militia attacked homeowners and prevented staff working for the institutions of the Palestinian Authority from reaching their places of work in Hebron. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September)

269. On 27 September, it was reported that Jewish settlers broke into a house in the Silwan neighbourhood of Jerusalem and chased out its Palestinian tenants, claiming they had bought the house and were in possession of the title deeds to

it. The tenant's son, Amin Khalil Mohammed Hudeh Malhi, suffered a concussion when he was attacked by the settlers. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September)

270. On 8 October, the OC of the Southern Command, General Shlomo Yanai, stated that his Command was investigating settlers' involvement in the shooting in Kfar Darom two weeks earlier. Mr. Yanai stated that the army considered the incidents to be very serious and added that it was clear to all that IDF was in charge of security and that settlers were not allowed to shoot. (Ha'aretz, 9 October)

271. On 13 October, it was reported that the Jerusalem-based Centre for the Protection of the Individual had appealed to the police chief of Judea and Samaria (West Bank) and the OC of IDF troops in the West Bank to investigate the cases of abuse of Palestinian residents of the Nablus area by settlers. A complaint filed by the association included an affidavit by a resident of the Kalandia refugee camp who declared under oath that on 7 October, while driving from Kalandia to the central market of Nablus, he was stopped by three armed settlers standing on the main road near the Shilo settlement. Threatening him with a gun, the settlers ordered him to stop, pulled him out of his car, tore his papers to pieces, including his identity card, drivers' licence and car insurance documents, and robbed him of his money: NIS 1,850 and 200 Jordanian dinars. After searching his vehicle, the settlers forced him to take off his shoes and undress completely and ordered him to return to where he had come from. (Ha'aretz, 13 October)

272. On 17 October, Jewish settlers from Kiryat Arba almost had a fist fight with Palestinian residents after a group of settlers tried to erect a barbed wire fence around an undeveloped piece of land adjoining the settlement. Soldiers kept the two sides apart after the Civil Administration issued an order for the work to stop, thus preventing the settlers from building the fence. The head of the Kiryat Arba Local Council stated that the fence was meant to protect settlement land from being claimed by Palestinians. (Jerusalem Post, 18 October)

273. On 21 October, Palestinian eyewitnesses reported clashes near Nablus between settlers and some 100 Palestinian residents from the village of Deir el-Hatab. According to the sources, farmers from the village protested against an attack on Palestinian farmers by settlers from the Alon Moreh settlement who tried to prevent the farmers from picking olives in their fields. The sources reported that the clashes broke out between Palestinians on one side and settlers and IDF soldiers on the other. Two Palestinian residents were slightly injured. (Ha'aretz, 22 October)

274. On 25 October, a group of 11 settlers passing themselves off as French tourists who sneaked into Jericho to pray at the Shalom Al Yisrael Synagogue caused a ruckus when they entered a Palestinian-owned restaurant and began praying there. The settlers, reportedly from Ofra, managed to avoid checkpoints on their way to the city. After finding the synagogue locked, one member of the group, claiming to be a tour guide, went to a restaurant and asked the owner whether his group could eat there. The owner agreed. However, upon entering the restaurant the group donned talliths and began reciting prayers. The stunned owner called the Palestinian police, which called in the Israeli liaison

officer for the Jericho area and the border police. The security forces asked the settlers to leave but they refused. The Israeli forces then dragged them away. The IDF held the group in the Jericho Israeli-Palestinian District Coordinating Office until the end of Shabbat. The Judea and Samaria (West Bank) District Police spokesman stated that the group was to be interrogated, following which it would be decided what measures would be taken against them. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 27 October)

275. On 27 October, a 10-year-old Palestinian boy was seriously wounded near Bethlehem when he was hit by a stone, apparently thrown by a settler from Betar. The settlement's security officer was arrested in connection with the incident. (Jerusalem Post, 28 October)

276. On 27 October, a settler from Betar allegedly beat to death an 11-year-old Palestinian boy (see list). According to the charge sheet, the settler caught the boy while chasing stone-throwers in the village of Husan. He then hit him and beat him on the head. When the boy fell to the ground, he stepped on his neck and hit him on the head with the butt of his gun. The boy was taken unconscious to Hadassah-University Hospital in Jerusalem. He was pronounced dead the next day. An autopsy performed by the National Forensic Institute at Abu Kabir showed that the boy had died from a blow on the left side of his neck which caused a blood clot in the brain. Thousands of persons attended the boy's funeral. Villagers stated that they were watching how Israeli justice would deal with the case. One youth stated that if an Arab had done this to a Jewish child, he would have been sent to prison for life and his family's house would have been destroyed. The youth suggested that Israelis would claim that the settler was insane and send him to prison for three months. The Hadash faction issued a statement expressing shock and disgust at the killing and blamed the Government for creating an atmosphere in which acts of violence by the far right took place. (Ha'aretz, 29 October, 4 November; Jerusalem Post, 29 October)

277. On 3 November, settlers torched a Palestinian home just outside the Kiryat Arba settlement. The house was badly damaged and some five family members were slightly injured by smoke inhalation. The father of the N'aman Dana family, stated that his house had been targeted by settlers for years. He stated that on numerous occasions his house had been damaged as revenge for attacks and that, among other things, shots had been fired at the solar heaters and stones and petrol bombs had been thrown into the house. In 1992, he was forced to seal three windows with bricks in order to prevent settlers from throwing objects inside. In 1995 he removed the bricks, thinking that the era of peace had begun. Mr. Dana claimed that the settlers' actions were aimed at driving him out of his home. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 4 November)

278. On 3 November, a serious arson attack was carried out against a Palestinian house located only yards away from the Kiryat Arba settlement in Hebron. According to eyewitnesses, Jewish settlers were seen in the area around the time the fire started. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 November)

279. On 8 and 9 November, thousands of Jews from all over Israel came to Hebron to show support for the Jewish settlement there. The visitors, some of whom slept in tents, thronged the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) in order to pray. It was opened only for Jews. Three busloads of Hadash supporters also

arrived in Hebron to stage a demonstration demanding the immediate redeployment of the IDF in the city and the division of Jerusalem. The group, consisting mostly of Israeli Arabs, clashed with Jews and with the police. When the police tried to disperse the demonstrators, they began to throw stones. Other Palestinians in the area soon joined in the clashes and 14 people were arrested. One Palestinian was threatened by Jews when he tried to enter the Kiryat Arba settlement in order to file a complaint with the police in connection with clashes. He claimed that during the confrontation, he was hit by a stone thrown by a settler. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 10 November)

280. On 12 November, a 50-year old Palestinian woman was shot in the leg near Hebron in what family members described as a drive-by attack by Jewish settlers. Officials at Hebron's Aliya Hospital stated that the woman was in satisfactory condition. The incident allegedly occurred when the woman, her husband and two family members arrived to work in a field they owned near the Yatta village. When they got out of their vehicle, a car with Israeli licence plates suddenly approached and 10 bullets were fired by its occupants, whom they identified as settlers on the basis of their long beards and kipot. The Judea Samaria (West Bank) district police, however, stated that the attack had never happened. Police sources stated that the Hebron district liaison office had investigated the matter and concluded that the family's version of the events was unfounded. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 13 November)

281. On 22 November, it was reported that residents of Azzun village (West Bank) had complained that settlers had blocked the access road to their village. According to the residents, the roadblock prevented them from having direct access to their fields, which were located on the other side of the road, and obliged them to take a long, roundabout route. The roadblock also disrupted communication with other villages whose children studied in Azzun. Following several requests by the village municipality, the Civil Administration had twice ordered the road to be opened. However, it was blocked again by settlers each time. (Ha'aretz, 22 November)

282. On 24 November, it was reported that the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) district police were preventing construction workers hired by the Reconstruction Committee of the Old City of Hebron from continuing the renovation of a Palestinian house near the Avraham Avinu settlement because of renewed confrontations with settlers who opposed the Committee's activities aimed at repopulating abandoned Palestinian houses in the Old City of Hebron. The renovation work was reportedly suspended on 20 November, after settlers threw stones, fruit and eggs at the workers. In a comment on the incident, the district police spokesman stated that the question of the legality of the work was not central, indicating that it was suspended for fear that it might cause unnecessary flare-ups in the whole area. Referring to the fact that the police had not taken any steps against the settlers who threw stones, he stated that there was no evidence proving that stones had been thrown. (Ha'aretz, 24 November)

283. On 24 November, dozens of Palestinian residents from Yatta staged a demonstration to protest against attempts by settlers from Maon to prevent them from working their land. The land in question was located south of Yatta and covered 4,000 dunums. It provides a livelihood for some 250 families. For

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three days, the settlers tried to prevent the residents from working on their land on the ground that it was State-owned and that the Palestinians had no rights over it. The residents complained that settlers were preventing them from bringing tractors to their farmland, were uprooting their fences and even destroying their crops. The Civil Administration spokesman stated that following a clash at the site on 22 November attributable to attempts by settlers to prevent the residents from working on their land, the Civil Administration had decided to check the Palestinians' claims and discovered that the land in question was indeed privately owned Palestinian land. He stated further that the Governor of Hebron came to the area on 23 November and notified the settlers that the Palestinians were allowed to continue working on their land. (Ha'aretz, 25 November)

284. On 25 November, members of the Palestinian Council's Land and Settlement Committee toured the Yatta area following a confrontation over farmland between villagers and settlers from Maon. The Council members visited the Hilat Al-Adra hill where settlers tried to take control over Palestinian-owned land and prevent its owner from entering it. The Civil Administration informed the settlers that the land was owned by Palestinians and that they were not allowed to prevent its legal owners from entering it. Mussa Mahamra, a lawyer and member of the Hebron Area Land Protection Committee, stated, however, that the notification carried no real weight. He claimed that settlers from the area were systematically ignoring the law and taking control of land adjacent to their settlements. The Palestinian Council members also visited a 200-dunum site called Umm el-Arisa south of the Sussiya settlement. The landowner, from Yatta village, claimed that settlers had recently uprooted olive trees which he had planted. Mr. Mahamra stated that also in this case, the Civil Administration had informed the owner that he was allowed to work the land. However, he was still barred from entering it and feared that if he uprooted trees planted there by settlers, a complaint would be filed against him with the police. Other Palestinian farmers told members of the Committee that a settler from Sussiya grazed his sheep and goats on their land. The flocks ate their crops and the seedlings they planted, but the police and the IDF did not enforce the law against the settler. The Committee members also visited the building of the Yatta municipality where hundreds of residents had gathered to tell them about the difficulties they faced whenever they wanted to work the land they owned located near settlements. The mayor of Yatta, Halil Younis, claimed that the settlements of Maon, Karmel, Beit Yatir, Etaniel and Sussiya, which were established on the village land, were occasionally expanding their territory at the expense of land belonging to the residents of Yatta. (Ha'aretz, 26 November)

285. On 28 November, dozens of settlers from Shilo and Alie blocked the Ramallah-Nablus road to protest against an increase in the number of incidents involving the throwing of stones by Palestinians near their settlements. The settlers were later dispersed by IDF troops who arrived on the scene. A similar incident in which settlers blocked the Ramallah-Givat Ze'ev road occurred a week earlier. Dozens of stone-throwing incidents were reportedly registered throughout the West Bank every day. (Ha'aretz, 29 November)

286. On 30 November, the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) district police detained for questioning four Palestinians and five settlers from Hebron on suspicion of

involvement in a violent confrontation in the town. The settlers were released later in the day while the Palestinians were placed in detention. According to the settlers, several Jewish youths were attacked by five Palestinians who threw stones at them, verbally abused them and tried to approach girls. Dozens of settlers arrived on the scene to help the youths and clashed with the Palestinians. According to the Palestinians, the settlers initiated the provocation, and there had been no contact between the Palestinians and the group of Jewish youths. (Ha'aretz, 1 December)

287. On 6 December, it was reported that Jewish settlers had sprayed with chemicals eight dunums of Palestinian land planted with olive trees in Kalkiliya, causing almost complete destruction. A few days earlier, Jewish settlers uprooted 130 olive trees in the same area. In a separate development, Jewish settlers from the Rachel settlement started work on the expansion of their settlement at the expense of privately owned Arab land in the villages of Karyout and Jalut near Nablus. (The Jerusalem Times, 6 December)

288. On 7 December, the spokesman for Hebron settlers was arrested by border policemen in the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) after he had tried to remove a waqf sign in the Cave. (Ha'aretz, 8 December)

289. On 7 December, the muezzin of Hirbat al-Hara'ik (located at the southern outskirts of Hebron near the Beit Hagai settlement) was rushed unconscious to Aliya Hospital in Hebron with serious bruises on the head, the right arm and left shoulder. According to testimony he gave to the human rights organization B'tselem, two armed Israeli citizens wearing kipot who identified themselves as members of the security forces arrived at his home and asked him to accompany them to the mosque where they beat him, together with six or seven other armed men of similar appearance. According to the muezzin, the men were settlers. (Ha'aretz, 12 December)

290. On 11 December, settlers from Hebron threw stones and eggs at and verbally abused a 40-member Palestinian delegation headed by Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe. Mr. Natshe stated that soldiers did not intervene. Following the incident, Palestinian youths clashed with IDF soldiers and threw stones at settlers. One Palestinian was detained. Mr. Natshe also complained about another incident on 10 December in which settlers threw stones at Palestinian workers renovating buildings in the Old City. The police did not stop the settlers in that case either. Instead, they made arrests among the Palestinian workers. (Ha'aretz, 12 December)

291. On 20 December, three Palestinian television cameramen working for foreign news agencies were verbally abused and hit by settlers who also smashed their cameras. The incident occurred when the cameramen arrived at Beit Hadassah following the throwing of an incendiary bottle there. According to one of the cameramen, soldiers who were standing nearby did not intervene. In another incident in Hebron, settlers attacked Palestinians going to the waqf to register for the pilgrimage to Mecca. In an additional incident, Palestinian sources reported that settlers attacked a Palestinian cyclist near the Avraham Avinu compound. Palestinian residents reported that other confrontations broke out in the town when settlers started to throw stones at Palestinian school girls near Beit Hadassah. Palestinians who gathered at the site responded by throwing

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stones at the settlers. The stone-throwing by both sides lasted until the police and the IDF arrived on the scene and dispersed the Palestinians. According to Palestinian eyewitnesses, the face of a Palestinian was slightly injured when he was hit by soldiers. (Ha'aretz, 22 December)

292. On 22 December, Jewish leaders in Hebron held a meeting aimed at devising a strategy to combat the renovation by Palestinians of abandoned homes in the casbah and near Beit Romano on the ground that their renovation posed a clear "security threat" to the Jewish settlement in the town. In a related development, Hebron settlement leader Noam Arnon reported that the IDF had halted the work of Palestinians who had begun to renovate a home in close proximity to Beit Romano. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 23 December)

293. On 25 December, the police removed some 30 settlers from two Palestinian-owned buildings in the Hebron casbah that they had tried to move into. The settlers were released later in the day. In another development, the police arrested six Palestinian workers carrying out renovation work on a Palestinian house near the Avraham Avinu compound. The Judea and Samaria (West Bank) police spokesman stated that the police had stopped the work and arrested the labourers out of fear that the operation could affect public safety. Hebron Mayor Natshe condemned the arrest as an additional capitulation to the pressure and violence that settlers used against labourers engaged in renovation work, stating that the residents of the Old City had the right to renovate their homes. He observed that it was unacceptable that the army and police would act according to settlers' instructions and give in to their demands. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 26 December)

294. On 30 December, a Palestinian man was shot dead (see list) by a settler from Kfar Darom in the Gush Katif area. According to the settlers, the man was shot dead after infiltrating the settlement and trying to attack two residents. The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights claimed, however, that the Palestinian was unarmed and had not entered the settlement. According to the Centre, the Palestinian, who was mentally ill, was shot while walking along a path near the settlement fence. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 30 December)

D. Treatment of detainees

(a) Measures concerning the release of detainees

295. No information was available.

(b) Other information concerning detainees

296. On 29 September 1996, 16 administrative detainees held in the Kfar Yona Prison went on a hunger strike, demanding that they be transferred to Megido Prison, where other administrative detainees were held. The detainees complained that since two Palestinian detainees had escaped from the prison on 4 August, they had been denied all the rights they had been granted by the Prison Service. In a letter addressed to the Interior Minister, the detainees claimed that they were ill-treated on a daily basis by the prison wardens, who also disrupted their sleep and meals and did not respect their prayer times.

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The majority of administrative detainees in Kfar Yona reportedly suffered from heart disease, blood pressure problems, kidney insufficiency and diabetes. They had been transferred to prisons run by the Prison Service so that they could benefit from better conditions of detention. They claimed, however, that their conditions were worse than those in Megido Prison. The Prison Service spokesman vehemently denied the charges that there had been any deterioration in detention conditions and claimed that no policy of revenge had been pursued against the detainees. (Ha'aretz, 1 October)

297. On 1 October, attorney Tamar Peleg charged that the detention conditions of administrative detainees at the Ashmoret Prison in Kfar Yona had worsened dramatically since the escape of two Palestinian detainees from the facility on 4 August. The detainees were on a hunger strike for the fourth consecutive day to protest against their conditions of detention. They demanded to be transferred to the IDF detention facility in Megido. In a letter sent to the OC of the prisoners' division of the Prison Service, Ms. Peleg charged that officers in the prison had intentionally provoked the administrative detainees during meals, walks and visits. Among other things, officers shouted at the detainees, abused them verbally and threatened to beat them. The letter alleged that since the escape, all administrative detainees had been confined to two cells, that their food rations had been reduced and that the quality of the food was very poor. Detainees were searched by prison wardens while their hands were tied behind their backs. The searches were conducted even during prayer, meal and sleeping hours. The letter indicated further that walks outside the cell had been shortened and that family visits could not take place as usual. In addition, prisoners were no longer allowed to receive newspapers in Hebrew, their sewing machine was removed, they were not allowed to iron their clothes, and those who had worked in the prison were prohibited from continuing their work. The Prison Service spokesman declined to comment on the charges contained in the letter and stated only that prisoners were dealt with "according to regulations, orders and the necessary considerations". (Ha'aretz, 2 October)

298. On 2 October, it was reported that a few days earlier administrative detainees at the Megido Prison had demonstrated against the six-month extension of the detention period of some detainees. (Ha'aretz, 2 October)

299. On 9 October, the Prison Service transferred to Ashkelon Prison 18 administrative detainees who were imprisoned at the Ashmoret Prison in Kfar Yona. The measure followed a hunger strike by the detainees who were protesting against the worsening of their conditions of detention and their incarceration together with criminal detainees. (Ha'aretz, 13 October)

300. On 12 October, the detention of the longest-standing administrative detainee was extended once again for six months. The detention of Ahmed Qatamesh, 46, an activist of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was extended for the eighth time. The detention order, signed by Colonel Ran Shamai, stated that the extension of the detention was necessary for security reasons and because of the detainee's involvement with the Popular Front. However, it did not list any specific accusations. Palestinian administrative detainees in Megido Prison staged a protest near the prison gate against the extension of Mr. Qatamesh's detention and waved banners reading "stop administrative detentions". Some 280 administrative detainees in the

prison had been boycotting the appeals committees for several months. According to the detainees, the committees were useless since detainees were not informed about the accusations against them and because they believed fair legal proceedings were not possible in a committee on which a military man sat. (Ha'aretz, 13 October)

301. On 18 October, it was reported that members of a number of institutions and human rights organizations staged a march in El-Bireh in order to show their solidarity with prisoners. The prisoners were on a hunger strike, demanding to be released in accordance with the Oslo Accords. (The Jerusalem Times, 18 October)

302. On 3 November, a judge in a Tel Aviv magistrate's court voiced strong criticism of the police because of the shameful detention conditions of two residents of the territories who were caught staying in Israel illegally for work purposes. The judge indicated that the complaints of the two should be checked out because "Israel was at the beginning of the month of November 1996 and not November 1796". The attorney defending the Palestinians stated that one of the detainees had not changed his clothes during the eight days of his detention because his family did not have a permit to enter Israel and therefore could not bring him a change of clothes. The detainee was also not able to use the toilet, which amounted to a hole in the floor, because his legs were paralysed and he could not squat down. The lawyer indicated further that the police did not respect a court order allowing the two detainees to phone their homes every day. (Ha'aretz, 4 November)

303. On 8 November, the High Court of Justice issued an interim order banning the GSS from using physical pressure during the interrogation of administrative detainee Mustafa Abu Nasser pending deliberations on his appeal. During the hearing, the GSS representative stated that Mr. Abu Nasser might have information that could help the security forces to thwart mass attacks. He added that if necessary, the GSS would request the High Court to cancel the interim order. Mr. Abu Nasser, a resident of the Jabalia refugee camp and a student at Bir Zeit University, had been arrested two weeks earlier at a military roadblock near Bir Zeit and had been interrogated since then. His attorney, André Rosenthal, claimed that he had been subjected to shaking and that between interrogations he had been placed in the "shabah" position, that is, seated on a small stool with his hands shackled behind his back, his legs tied and with a sack over his head while loud music was played incessantly. In addition, he was forced to perform repeated kneeling exercises and to stand with his hands raised, and was hung on the door by his hands. In another related development, it was reported that the Public Committee against Torture had appealed to the High Court of Justice on behalf of another administrative detainee, Walid Hamadan, against his torture by the GSS. The Court was requested to order the GSS to allow lawyer Lea Tzemel to meet with the detainee in order to give him legal advice and hear his complaints. The appeal claimed that Mr. Hamadan had been arrested two weeks earlier and interrogated ever since at the Russian compound in Jerusalem. His detention was extended on the order of a military court, which also prohibited him from meeting with his lawyer. Ms. Tzemel claimed in the appeal that experience had shown that detainees were barred from meeting with lawyers in order to allow GSS to use violent interrogation methods against them and to conceal it from the public eye. She

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further indicated that such methods had previously caused the death of detainees, including Abed Harizat. (Ha'aretz, 10 November)

304. On 14 November, it was reported that the chairman of the Palestinian Prisoner Release Committee, Hisham Abed A-Razek, had stated that Israel continued to violate both the Oslo Accords and international conventions in its treatment of Palestinian prisoners. Mr. Razek pointed out that according to the Taba Agreement, some 1,700 detainees were to be released in three stages. However, the majority, including female prisoners, had still not been released. In addition, the detention conditions had deteriorated dramatically. Mr. Razek complained in particular about the denial of family visits for several months and underlined that contrary to previous regulations, only first-degree relatives and siblings under 16 or over 40 were currently allowed to visit the detainees. Finally, he observed that the joint Israeli-Palestinian Prisoner Release Committee had not convened for the past 11 months and that he and his colleagues had not been allowed to visit prisons since the Israeli elections. (Ha'aretz, 14 November)

305. On 14 November, the High Court of Justice acceded to the State's request to allow the GSS to use "physical pressure" in the interrogation of a Palestinian detainee suspected of having critical information about an imminent "terrorist" attack. The detainee, Mohammed Hamadan, a known Islamic Jihad activist, was one of those deported to Lebanon in 1992. He had spent most of the time since his return under arrest or in administrative detention. On 24 October, he was handed to the GSS for interrogation. On 12 November, he petitioned the High Court to issue an injunction forbidding the GSS from torturing him during interrogation. A day later, the State consented. However, on 14 November, the State filed an urgent request for the cancellation of the injunction on the grounds that it had obtained new information that made immediate and intensive interrogation imperative. (Ha'aretz, 13, 15 November; Jerusalem Post, 15 November)

306. On 16 November, it was reported that sources from the security authorities and the Prime Minister's office had expressed satisfaction at the High Court's decision to allow the GSS to use "physical methods" in the interrogation of Mr. Hamadan. On the other hand, the Public Committee against Torture in Israel issued a strong condemnation of the High Court's ruling. In its statement, the Committee expressed doubts about the argument by the GSS that there was a founded suspicion that Hamadan held vital information, which, if immediately obtained, could save lives and prevent serious threats regarding any kind of interrogation. The High Court's decision to overturn the interim order prohibiting the GSS from exercising physical pressure during the interrogation of Mr. Hamadan was mainly based on the claim of the State Attorney's office that Mr. Hamadan's was a "ticking bomb" case. During the hearing, Justice Heshin spoke about a bomb planted and about to explode at any moment in a crowded area. In such cases, the Justice stated, it would be inconceivable to prevent the detection of the bomb and its deactivation, even if it meant exerting physical pressure. The Public Committee against Torture rejected such a broad interpretation of the "ticking bomb" concept. According to the Committee, "ticking bomb" cases were rare, limited in time and space and would not be applied to dozens of cases in which there was "some sort of information that could lead at some stage to a plan to plant a bomb sometime in an unknown

place". The Committee pointed out that interrogators had numerous and varied legal means at their disposal to deal with such suspicions, including moderate isolation of detainees, the use of different stratagems, long interrogation sessions, and so on. The Committee underlined that in the specific case of Mr. Hamadan, it was unknown and could not be known whether he met the well-defined criteria of a "ticking bomb" case. "As far as we know", the Committee stated, "Mr. Hamadan was arrested four weeks ago and had been interrogated ever since - i.e., a bomb with a particularly long suspicion fuse". As for the circumstances of Mr. Hamadan's arrest, his father stated that his son was arrested on 6 October. He claimed that the soldiers who surrounded the house had shattered the windows and several stones fell into a room where Mr. Hamadan's children were sleeping. He also stated that the family had been unable to visit him in prison because of the closure. (Ha'aretz, 17 November)

307. On 17 November, the High Court of Justice approved several GSS methods of interrogating a suspected "terrorist", including subjecting him to sleep deprivation and placing a sack over his head. The justices ruled on a petition filed by Khader Mubarak, who had been under interrogation since 21 October. Mr. Mubarak's attorney, André Rosenthal, argued that what the GSS described as "normal methods" such as keeping Mr. Mubarak crouched in uncomfortable positions for long hours with his head covered with a sack and his arms tied tightly behind his back or depriving him of sleep, amounted to torture. After listening to classified evidence, the justices agreed that those methods were justified in Mr. Mubarak's case. However, they ruled that the GSS had to ensure that the detainee's handcuffs were not so tight as to be painful. The State promised not to tie prisoners' hands behind their backs in uncomfortable positions. Mr. Rosenthal stated after the hearing that despite the small gain he was disappointed with the more significant losses and indicated that the court had proved its total reluctance to deal with the issue of torture. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 18 November)

308. On 17 November, Palestinian detainees held in Israel declared a 24-hour hunger strike to protest against the deterioration of their detention conditions. According to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, there were increasing reports of serious and continuing deterioration in the detention conditions of Palestinians in Israeli prisons. (Ha'aretz, 18 November)

309. On 18 November, it was reported that the International Association for the Rights of the Child had demanded that the Prison Service institute a regular study programme for minors from the territories who were detained in its facilities. In a letter sent to the Prisons Commissioner, the Association's lawyer pointed out that Israeli detainees who were minors had a rich curriculum at their disposal. The lawyer wrote that the right to study was among the basic rights of a person under the age of 18. This right was recognized under international law and was deeply rooted in the laws of enlightened countries, including Israel's law of compulsory education. In answering the charges, the Prison Service spokesman stated that the introduction of regular study programmes for Palestinian minors was not feasible for security reasons. Nevertheless, the Prison Service allowed any security detainees, including minors, to study independently. Among other things, security detainees could receive books with hardly any limitations, study by correspondence and enrol in

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schools having examinations in accordance with the curricula of Jordan and Egypt, with the assistance of education officers. (Ha'aretz, 18 November)

310. On 19 November, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel informed the High Court of Justice that it had rejected an arrangement proposed by the State Attorney's office under which hearings on the extension of the detention of Palestinian residents from the territories who were arrested in Israel would continue to be held in detention facilities and not in military courts. The Association also demanded that the detainees' attorneys or their relatives be informed when such hearings were expected to take place and that they be held in locations to which the detainees' families could have access. The appeal was filed on behalf of four Palestinian detainees in Kishon Prison. One of the detainees stated that without any explanation, he was brought to an interrogation chamber in shackles and with a sack over his head. When the sack was removed, he found himself in front of an officer who notified him that his detention had been extended without allowing him to defend himself or asking him whether he wanted to have an attorney. After the appeal was submitted, the State Attorney's office proposed a new arrangement whereby either the detainee's attorney or family members would be notified of the place and date of the hearing, with entry permits to Israel being granted to attorneys from the territories to enable them to represent and give legal advice to detainees held in Israel. However, the State Attorney's office rejected the Association's demand that hearings be held in military courts. It claimed that taking detainees to court to extend their detention would have a negative impact on the interrogation and on the security of the State, in light of the nature of the suspicions, the organizational affiliation of the detainees and the dangers that they posed. In response, Dan Yakir, a lawyer from the Association for Human Rights, stated that no effort was made to balance the interrogation requirements with impartial trial proceedings and the rights of the detainees. He stated that in his view, judging by the State's pronouncements, it would appear that trial proceedings were a nuisance hampering the effectiveness of the interrogation. According to Mr. Yakir, the holding of trials within prison walls affected the judicial authority's independence and the defendant's faith in the judge's impartiality. Furthermore, Mr. Yakir claimed that the arrangement proposed by the State Attorney's office posed difficulties that rendered the right of lawyers and relatives to visit detainees insignificant. He expressed doubts that family members would manage to obtain entry permits to Israel on time in light of the bureaucratic difficulties involved. Finally, he indicated that in the Kishon detention facility there was no place for detainees and their attorneys to sit and that they had to stand during the whole hearing. The room would have only one bench with three seats, which made meaningless the State Attorney's declaration that hearings would be held in public. (Ha'aretz, 20 November)

311. On 22 November, the Palestinian Lawyers' Association staged a strike in protest against the High Court's decision to allow the GSS to exert physical pressure during the interrogation of Palestinian detainees Mohammed Hamadan and Khader Mubarak. (Ha'aretz, 22 November)

312. On 24 November, it was reported that the United Nations Committee against Torture was demanding that the Israeli Government immediately submit to it a special report on the ruling by the High Court of Justice authorizing GSS

interrogators to exert physical pressure during interrogations. A letter sent by the committee Chairman to the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations stated that "the Committee wished to recall that under the second paragraph, second article, of the Geneva Convention, under no special circumstances, not even a state or a threat of war, internal political instability or another urgent public matter could torture be justified". Referring to the ruling by the High Court of Justice, the committee Chairman stated that "these methods are not in line with the Geneva Convention". (Ha'aretz, 24 November)

313. On 24 November, a report published by the Prisoners' Society revealed that deteriorating conditions inside Israeli prisons had driven prisoners to suicide attempts in Nitzan Prison. The report stated that letters from Nitzan mentioned that some 88 prisoners were detained in solitary confinement. (The Jerusalem Times, 29 November)

314. On 26 November, the attorney representing the International Association for the Rights of the Child, Tamar Peleg, demanded that the Military Advocate-General immediately intervene in order to allow relatives to visit detainees from the territories who were incarcerated in prisons in Israel. According to the attorney, family visits had been completely suspended since the imposition of the latest closure in October, despite the fact that numerous labourers from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip had already been allowed to enter the country. In a letter addressed to the Military Advocate-General, the attorney also demanded that the arbitrary criteria according to which it was decided whether family members were allowed to visit detainees be abolished and that the issuing of permits be made more efficient. The letter stated that under current regulations, only parents, children and siblings under 16 could apply for permits. This criterion affected both family members who did not fall within those categories and numerous unmarried detainees. In addition, applicants had to wait for several weeks before receiving an answer by the Israeli security authorities. The attorney claimed that experience had proven that the number of applications rejected arbitrarily was high and that family members saw that their permits were automatically annulled each and every time a closure was imposed and that they had to wait several weeks before being allowed to reapply. (Ha'aretz, 27 November)

315. On 29 November, the High Court of Justice allowed the GSS to continue to interrogate a Palestinian detainee without permitting him to receive advice from his lawyer. The judges refused to discuss the fear expressed by the petitioners that the GSS was torturing the detainee. They took note, however, of the statement of the GSS representative that the interrogation was being carried out according to the law. The detainee, Abu Sirh'an, had been arrested 12 days earlier on charges of security-related offences. Since his arrest, he had been issued two orders prohibiting him to meet with his lawyer, Lea Tzemel. During the hearing, Ms. Tzemel argued that there were no clear criteria determining in which cases the GSS was allowed to issue such orders. According to Ms. Tzemel, the issuing of such orders was "almost automatic". (Ha'aretz, 1 December)

316. On 30 November, some 500 Palestinian men, women and children organized a march on behalf of Palestinian prisoners. The protesters set out from the Women's Club in Hebron to the IDF checkpoint near Rachel's Tomb where the Prisoners' Club spokesman made a speech calling on the Government to honour the

peace accords and release many of the 5,000 Palestinians who were still in jail for security-related offences. The demonstrators, who carried placards calling for freedom for prisoners and the lifting of the closure, surged forward but were dispersed by IDF soldiers who fired tear gas. Similar marches were held in other major Palestinian towns in the West Bank, including Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, Kalkiliya and Hebron. Fatah officials stated that the decision to hold the marches stemmed from a message they had received from prisoners through their lawyers that they planned to go on a hunger strike in order to protest against the indifference regarding their conditions of detention. (Jerusalem Post, 1 December)

317. On 4 December, a Palestinian detainee appealed to the High Court of Justice to order the Defence Minister and the GSS to allow him to meet with his lawyer. The Court was also requested to forbid the GSS to torture him. The detainee, a 21-year-old engineering student from Isawiya, was arrested three weeks earlier on security-related charges and had been under interrogation ever since at the Russian compound lock-up in Jerusalem. Since his detention, the GSS had issued several orders preventing him from meeting with a lawyer. In the appeal, which was submitted through the Palestinian Association for Human Rights and the Environment, the detainee's sister expressed fears that the orders were meant to conceal from the public the fact that her brother was being tortured by the GSS. The appeal claimed that the members of the detainee's family feared that the interrogators were availing themselves of the permission given by the interministerial committee on the GSS to "shake" detainees, hold them in painful positions for long hours, play loud music, subject them to sleep deprivation, prevent them from having meals at reasonable hours and keep them naked in front of air conditioners. (Ha'aretz, 5 December)

318. On 10 December, it was reported that three Palestinian administrative detainees had appealed to the Prison Commissioner demanding that their detention conditions be the same as those of Israeli administrative detainees who had been detained at Prison Service facilities over the past years. According to affidavits by the detainees, all 16 administrative detainees at Shikma Prison had been held in a 36-square-metre room, toilet included. The cell had small windows with bars and was not ventilated. The prisoners spent 19 hours a day in the cell. There were only five chairs, one small stool and two plastic tables. As a first step in making their detention conditions equal to those of Israelis, the petitioners demanded that no more than six detainees be held in a cell, which would be ventilated and would be large enough to contain three tables, six chairs, a television table and lamps near each bed. They also demanded that detainees be allowed to move freely between the cells, have free access to an internal yard where they could spend the day, be allowed to keep computers and to phone their families and lawyers. (Ha'aretz, 10 December)

319. On 11 December, the High Court of Justice gave the GSS permission to continue interrogating suspected Hamas "terrorist" Hassan Salameh. The Court indicated that it would reconsider Salameh's petition against his interrogation in 45 days. (Jerusalem Post, 11, 12 December)

320. On 15 December, it was reported that a hunger strike staged by Palestinian security detainees at the Kishon detention facility had entered its eighth consecutive day. The detainees informed a lawyer from the Palestinian

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Association for Human Rights and the Environment that they would continue their strike until they were separated from criminal detainees. They claimed that their incarceration with criminal detainees exposed them to drugs and violence. They also complained about their detention conditions. They stated that 18 detainees were crowded into one cell. There were insufficient beds, and six detainees had to sleep on the floor. In addition, they were not allowed to receive any family visits or have access to a phone, which was not the case with the detainees. (Ha'aretz, 16 December)

321. On 16 December, the High Court of Justice issued an interim order prohibiting GSS interrogators from exerting physical pressure during the interrogation of Islamic Jihad activist Mouhamed Hamadan, whom the GSS had labelled a "ticking bomb" case. The interim order was issued with the agreement of the State Attorney's office, which announced that for the time being, there was no need to interrogate Mr. Hamadan using physical means. Sources close to Hamadan claimed that his interrogation had recently been suspended, although he had not admitted to the charges against him. The interruption of the interrogation and the State Attorney's announcement, they claimed, indicated that the GSS had arrived at the conclusion that Hamadan was no longer a "ticking bomb" case. They argued that this proved that the GSS had misled the High Court in the information it had provided to it so that it could interrogate Mr. Hamadan using physical means. (Ha'aretz, 18 December)

322. On 25 December, 6,000 female and male Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails staged a one-day hunger strike in protest against prison conditions. The Palestinian Prisoners' Society expressed its concern over the recent transfer of a number of prisoners from the Shata into the Al-Damoun Prison for undisclosed reasons. The prisoners requested that their families be informed of the transfer so that they could continue to visit them. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 December)

E. Annexation and settlement

323. On 21 September 1996, hundreds of residents of Bethlehem marched to Rachel's Tomb to protest against the Israeli Government's settlement policy and the "protection" works being carried out around the Tomb. The protesters carried signs calling for the lifting of the closure, which prevented Palestinians from entering Jerusalem, and the release of Palestinian prisoners. (Ha'aretz, 22 September)

324. On 22 September 1996, a widespread protest movement was launched in Bidu village, northwest of Jerusalem, to condemn and confront settlement expansion, land confiscation and the proliferation of circular roads. The movement protested in particular against the presence of bulldozers from the Har Hadar settlement that had moved onto the property owned by the villagers of Bidu and Beit Sureik. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September)

325. On 24 September, members of the Elad organization occupied an additional house in the East Jerusalem village of Silwan. The house was reportedly purchased more than a year before but could not be occupied until legal proceedings to evict the previous tenant had been completed. The group, which

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in recent years had spearheaded an effort to move Jewish families into the City of David section of Silwan, now owned 10 houses in the village.

326. On 25 September, eyewitnesses stated that Jewish settlers accompanied by soldiers had been seen surveying the area of Qubat Al-Janeb in the Old City of Hebron. One week after Israel announced that it would be confiscating more property in Hebron, surveyors were reported to be in the area located south of the Ibrahimi Mosque and in the settlement area of Beit Abraham near the market. The IDF had confiscated a row of shops in the vegetable market of Hebron two weeks earlier. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 September)

327. On 29 September, National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon visited the Netzarim, Kfar Darom and Gush Katif settlements in the Gaza Strip where he met with settlers' representatives. The settlers expressed their satisfaction with the recent operations of the IDF in the territories and especially with the fact that not even one settler had been injured during all the violent clashes with the Palestinians. Mr. Sharon, for his part, told settlers that he had come to express his gratitude to them and to the IDF. Responding to a journalist's question of whether the establishment of settlements such as Kfar Darom, which are in problematic locations that always turned into flashpoints, had not been a mistake, Mr. Sharon stated that each and every settlement in the Gaza Strip was important and fulfilled the task assigned to it. He added that all governmental offices were obliged and would be happy to provide assistance to those settlements. Responding to the question of whether a new neighbourhood would be constructed in the Kfar Darom settlement, Mr. Sharon stated that, "God willing, all settlements would develop and prosper under the current Government". At the end of Mr. Sharon's visit, the head of the Gaza Regional Coast Council stated that settlers had received answers that were more than satisfactory. (Ha'aretz, 30 September)

328. On 17 October, it was reported that the Yisrael Ba'aliya and the National Religious Party had called on Prime Minister Netanyahu to immediately allow the 3,000 empty apartments in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) to be occupied. (Jerusalem Post, 17 October)

329. On 17 October, Mr. Netanyahu vowed to personally push forward development plans for settlements in Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza, in response to accusations levelled by settlement leaders, who had charged that the Government was holding up development. During a meeting with settlement leaders, Mr. Netanyahu reportedly agreed to allow specific development projects in the settlements, including populating existing housing units that were kept empty under the previous Government and building new housing units at several sites. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 18 October)

330. On 17 October, four families from East Jerusalem who owned an apartment building on the northern border of Jerusalem appealed to the High Court of Justice to order the IDF to evacuate its soldiers from the building. The IDF had reportedly seized the building three weeks before, following fighting in the area between soldiers and Palestinian policemen, and established an observation post there overlooking the Jerusalem-Ramallah road. Three of the families who appealed to the High Court did not live in the building for various reasons. A fourth family had been living there for three years but was absent when the

soldiers occupied it. Upon return, they were expelled by the soldiers who claimed that the building was a "closed military zone". The father of the family claimed that the soldiers had caused damage to the building and to their apartment. He stated that among other things, doors were broken and windows and bars had been removed. (Ha'aretz, 18 October)

331. On 17 October, scores of settlers from Kiryat Arba started to fence off an open field covering dozens of dunums of land north of the settlement. Policemen who arrived on the scene after complaints were lodged by Palestinian residents stopped the work. According to the head of the Kiryat Arba Council, the land in question was State-owned, and its fencing was aimed at preventing the Palestinians from taking control of it. The Palestinian residents who had filed the complaint claimed, however, that the fencing operation was aimed at creating facts on the ground and seizing the land prior to the signing of an accord concerning the redeployment of IDF troops in the Hebron area. (Ha'aretz, 18 October)

332. On 20 October, Third Way and Knesset members toured the Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip in order to acquaint themselves with the problems faced by settlers. Faction chairman Yehuda Harel and Knesset member Alex Lubotsky stated that they felt there was a need to strengthen the settlements in Gush Katif and implement the party's programme for the separation of Jewish and Palestinian communities. Knesset member Emanuel Zissman stated that Netzarim and Kfar Darom had to be protected. He stressed, however, that if it proved impossible to keep the two settlements under a permanent agreement, they would have to be moved to the Gush Katif area, where it would be possible to maintain Israeli sovereignty. Meanwhile, a senior army officer responsible for the area revealed that the number of soldiers in the area had been increased and that security posts and bunkers had been strengthened. (Jerusalem Post, 21 October)

333. On 21 October, Deputy Housing Minister Meir Parush stated that Israel's master plan for development and construction would have to refer also to settlements in Judea and Samaria (West Bank). Mr. Parush made his statement during a conference organized by the Jerusalem-based Construction Centre on the subject of Housing Ministry and planning challenges for the year 2000. (Ha'aretz, 22 October)

334. On 24 October, a high-ranking settlement official met with advisers to Mr. Netanyahu in order to elaborate details that would enable the sale of some 2,400 government-owned housing units in the territories. The meeting took place a week after Mr. Netanyahu promised settlement leaders that he would personally ensure that a freeze on the sale of those homes would be lifted. On 23 October, the Knesset Finance Committee approved a NIS 57 million budget for completion of the infrastructure for the homes. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 October)

335. On 24 October, six yeshiva students and their rabbi were allowed into the yeshiva at Joseph's Tomb at Nablus. This was the first time that the IDF had allowed students onto the site since the fighting occurred there four weeks earlier. The seven were reportedly driven into the compound under heavy IDF guard and were to share the site with some 30 IDF soldiers. Before the rioting, there were some 70 students and 6 soldiers in the compound. A spokesman for the yeshiva disclosed, however, that the number of students would gradually increase

and that the institution was drawing up plans to build a permanent structure to replace the temporary structure which was burned down during the rioting. (Jerusalem Post, 25 October)

336. On 24 October, representatives of a group affiliated with the Ateret Cohanim reoccupied an East Jerusalem building from which they were evicted by the police a month earlier. The reoccupation came after the group had reached a temporary agreement with the Arab family who claimed to own part of the building. A border police patrol remained stationed outside the building out of concern that the Jewish group's return would cause unrest. Sources close to the settlement group hinted but declined to specify that the building, located across the street from the American Consulate in East Jerusalem, might be used for business that would attract Jewish consumers, such as a café or a restaurant. (Jerusalem Post, 25 October)

337. On 25 October, it was reported that the municipality of West Jerusalem had announced a plan to expropriate an additional 300 dunums of land in the neighbourhood of Shufat in East Jerusalem. Three thousand dunums of Palestinian-owned land had already been expropriated recently in the same area for Jewish settlement purposes. The 300 dunums of land in question were located on the site where the municipality intends to build Road 21 for use by the Ramat Shufat settlement. The settlement, inhabited by ultra-orthodox Jews, comprises more than 2,000 housing units and was built on a huge plot of land belonging to Shufat, which was first expropriated for public use. To date, more than 77 per cent of Shufat land has been expropriated either for Jewish settlements and roads serving the settlements or to be used as green areas. (The Jerusalem Times, 25 October)

338. On 27 October, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert announced that the Government had given its backing for a multi-million-shekel, four-year plan to improve the infrastructure and services for Jerusalem's Arab community in order to demonstrate its commitment to maintaining East Jerusalem under Israeli control. The plan, which included projects ranging from new roads and sewage systems to schools and sports facilities, was approved in principle by Mr. Netanyahu and Finance Minister Dan Meridor. The exact details still remained to be worked out. (Jerusalem Post, 28 October)

339. On 28 October, it was reported that Mr. Netanyahu had given his approval for 3,000 apartments in the territories to be occupied. The Construction and Housing Ministry had begun assessing the almost 3,000 housing units that it had built in the territories in the early 1990s before putting them up for sale. A spokesman for the Ministry stated that the fixing of prices would take several months. The housing projects were reportedly initiated by the Shamir Government and in many cases were finished under the Rabin Government. However, because of the Labour Government's freeze, they had not been put up for sale. The apartments were reportedly spread throughout the territories, with most of them in the settlements of Ariel, Karnei Shomron and Kiryat Arba. According to Housing Ministry and settlement officials, settlers had moved into some 1,700 units and in some cases were paying rent to the settlement or putting money in a bank account for the Government. In a statement issued in response to the decision to sell the houses, the Peace Now movement charged that the Government was wasting public funds and giving the apartments to settlers almost for free.

The Meretz Party also charged that the Government planned to sell the apartments for significantly less money than it had invested in them. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 28 October)

340. On 28 October, Peace Now charged that settlers had established a new settlement composed of 14 mobile homes one kilometre from the Itamar settlement in Samaria (West Bank). In a letter addressed to Defence Minister Mordechai, the head of the movement requested that the caravans, which were already inhabited, be evacuated. (Ha'aretz, 29 October)

341. On 28 October, the Centre for the Protection of the Individual appealed to the High Court of Justice to prohibit the Interior Ministry from obliging Arab residents of East Jerusalem to follow a number of procedures that were not demanded from other Israeli residents in order to obtain a new identity card when one had been stolen or lost. A lawyer from the Centre claimed in the appeal that the Arab residents of East Jerusalem were the only residents of the country who had to bring certificates from a judge, a policeman and a mukhtar (village chief) in order to obtain an identity card. The appeal charged further that numerous difficulties were involved in obtaining the certificates, including humiliating questioning and waiting at the Minorities' Section of the police station, as if the applicants were criminal suspects. (Ha'aretz, 29 October)

342. On 29 October, the Secretary-General of the Palestinian Authority's Ministerial Council condemned the new Israeli plan to build an additional 8,200 housing units in the West Bank. The plan was disclosed in the Israeli daily Yediot Aharanot, which quoted officials of the Israeli Ministry of Defence as saying that the Government had agreed to the building of an additional 4,000 housing units in the settlement of Kiryat Sefer, of another 3,500 units in Matetyahu Gimmel and 700 units in Or Shameyah, which were part of the belt known as Modiin, located halfway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 November)

343. On 30 October, dozens of Palestinian residents of the Kharbata village (Ramallah area) stood in the way of and threw stones at bulldozers carrying out works for the expansion of the Kiryat Sefer settlement. IDF troops who arrived on the scene temporarily suspended the operation. (Ha'aretz, 1 November)

344. On 31 October, the High Court of Justice rejected a petition holding up the construction of the controversial Jewish neighbourhood of Har Homa in Jerusalem. Deputy Housing Minister Porush hailed the Court's decision, stating that the Housing Ministry would immediately begin work on the project. Mr. Porush reportedly told Army Radio that the first stage of the construction was slated to include some 6,500 housing units. Peace Now issued a statement condemning the planned construction and warned that confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians would occur when the construction started. The Har Homa plan was introduced in 1990 but was shelved by repeated court appeals against the expropriation of land for the site and by Palestinian and international pressure against building in an area annexed to Jerusalem in 1967. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 1 November)

345. On 1 November, Israeli authorities were reported to have prevented the Palestine Agricultural Society from paving an agricultural road linking the village of Joreish in the Nablus area with the Ghor area around Jericho. Work on 25 agricultural roads near the village of Quseen had also been blocked. This was part of a move to stop Palestinian farmers from entering areas already confiscated. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 November)

346. On 3 November, National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon vowed to speed up the construction of thousands of housing units and several roads north of Ramallah. Mr. Sharon, who had spearheaded previous settlement efforts, promised that a settlement drive was on the way. Touring Judea and Samaria (West Bank), Mr. Sharon stated that there was sufficient land in the region to build some 22,000 housing units in the settlements of Ateret, Nahliel and Halamish. According to Mr. Sharon, most of the land in question was State-owned and there was therefore no need for confiscation or purchasing procedures preceding the construction. Mr. Sharon's pronouncement seemed to pacify settler leaders who were angry over the Hebron withdrawal plans. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 4 November)

347. On 8 November, it was reported that the Israeli Government had welcomed a plan to build a new settlement north of Ramallah that would include 2,000 apartments to house religious Jews. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 November)

348. On 10 November, IDF soldiers shot dead a 36-year-old Palestinian man (see list) and wounded some 12 others (two moderately and the rest slightly) during a protest staged by Palestinian residents against the Israeli Government's decision to confiscate 2,000 dunums of their land in order to expand the Kiryat Sefer settlement. The incident reportedly occurred when some 200 Palestinian protesters, including elderly men and women from the villages of Kharbata, Naaleh and Deir Kadis, set off from the central mosque of Deir Kadis towards Kiryat Sefer, where bulldozers were working on land for a Jewish housing project. According to several eyewitnesses, some seven soldiers emerged from behind olive trees, ordered the protesters to halt and pushed them back. When the protesters ignored the order and advanced a few metres, the soldiers threw tear-gas grenades. Some Palestinians responded by throwing stones, whereupon the soldiers opened fire from a distance of less than 10 metres, killing one Palestinian. Friends of the victim stated that he was killed while carrying papers proving his family's ownership of the land on which Kiryat Sefer settlement was expanded. The IDF issued a statement according to which soldiers had acted in accordance with regulations. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 11 November)

349. On 12 November, confrontations broke out between Jewish settlers and Palestinians at Givat Hazayit, north of the Efrat settlement in Gush Ezion. The incident occurred after the Efrat Local Council started the construction of a "security road" in the area of Givat Hazayit, which was the scene of violent clashes during the previous Government's office. Three Palestinians who lay down in front of a tractor and warned its driver and a Civil Administration officer not to continue the operation were detained for interrogation by the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) police. On 14 November, settlers resumed work under heavy military guard and completed the paving of the security road. (Ha'aretz, 13, 15 November)

350. On 13 November, the Palestinian Legislative Council's Land and Settlement Committee issued a report charging that the residents of five Palestinian villages in the Kalkiliya area were prohibited from reaching their farmland without a special permit, which was granted only to the oldest residents. The villages, located between Salfit and Kalkiliya, were Zawiya, Mas-ha, Azzun and Saniria Beit Amin. The prohibited area stretched over 4,500 dunums. The report indicated that neither agricultural machines nor sheep and goats were allowed onto the farmland, a measure the Committee believed was aimed at damaging the land and its produce and forcing farmers to give it up. (Ha'aretz, 14 November)

351. On 14 November, Israeli bulldozers continued to level Palestinian land on Deir Qiddis, west of Ramallah, despite a retaining order issued by the Israeli High Court. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 November)

352. On 17 November, the Civil Administration prevented a group of Palestinians from working on land located on a hill known as Givat Hazayit. A Civil Administration spokesman stated that the Palestinians, who were from Atras village, had begun working on State-owned land. It was reported that a week earlier a Jewish contractor began excavations on the land for a residential project for the Efrat settlement. Another project for the settlement, involving the construction of some 30 housing units and a school, was in the final stages of development on the other side of the hill. (Jerusalem Post, 18 November)

353. On 19 November, it was reported that the Industry and Trade Ministry had given assurances to the Emmanuel settlement that it would help it to develop an industrial area in addition to some 1,200 housing units slated for construction in the settlement. Defence Minister Mordechai recently gave final approval for the construction of the homes, 500 of which were expected to be built in 1997 and the rest in 1998. The Emmanuel projects were the first to be implemented on the initiative of the Netanyahu Government. The Government had also given its green light for the construction of some 2,000 housing units in the Kiryat Sefer and Matityahu settlements. The plans had been drawn up under the previous Government. In another development on 19 November, Jerusalem municipality officials revealed that NIS 800,000 had been budgeted for the planning of the controversial Eastern Gate project which, if approved, would entail the expropriation of Arab-owned land. The Eastern Gate project, which is to include up to 2,200 homes for Jewish families and a technological park, would cover the area between the Pisgat Zeev settlement, the Ma'aleh Adumim highway and the A-Zayim village. The project was first tabled in the late 1980s when Mr. Sharon was Housing Minister. Jerusalem Mayor Olmert repeatedly stated that he supported commencing with construction as soon as possible. In another development, some 30 Palestinian residents of Artas village (Bethlehem area) clashed with IDF soldiers. The residents tried to prevent bulldozers from levelling the ground in order to expand the Efrat settlement, in violation of an interim court order prohibiting work on the site pending a final deliberation on an appeal filed by the residents. Palestinian Council member Bishara Daoud wrestled with police officers during the incident while two Palestinians from El-Khader village were arrested by the Judea and Samaria district police. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 19, 20 November)

354. On 19 November, Jewish settlers from Efrat seized 125 acres of land belonging to the villages of Khadr and Artas in the Bethlehem area. The

settlers paved a road under the protection of soldiers and the police. In a separate development, Israeli soldiers prevented three landowners from the village of Beit Amin in the Kalkiliya area from ploughing their land. The Israeli authorities then informed the landowners that 25 dunums of their land had been purchased and were now Israeli-owned. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 November)

355. On 21 November, Peace Now charged that more than NIS 900 million was being earmarked from the State budget to expand settlements, pave roads in the territories, grant various benefits to settlers, confiscate land in Har Homa in Jerusalem and protect settlers in the City of David in Jerusalem. In a memorandum addressed to Prime Minister Netanyahu, Peace Now charged further that the Government did not limit itself to this but also had decided to sell, at a price of some $17,000 per unit, the 3,000 apartments in the territories whose sale had been frozen under the previous Government. (Ha'aretz, 21 November)

356. On 22 November, a joint meeting of the PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian Authority's cabinet decided on a four-pronged confrontation with Israel over expansion of settlements. It claimed that the policy was aimed at placing Jerusalem under siege and dividing the West Bank into cantons. The decision called for reclaiming land, opening new roads to the land and supporting farmers politically and financially as well as for popular confrontation every time Israeli bulldozers appeared on Palestinian land. The Palestinian Authority expressed its particular concern over the authorization given by the Defence Minister for the building of some 1,200 housing units in the Emmanuel settlement which would double its size, and the expansion of Kiryat Sefer. The Emmanuel settlement, is located more than 25 kilometres from the Green Line, while Kiryat Sefer is close to it. Both are inhabited by ultra-Orthodox Jews, whom the Palestinians regard as the most hard-line religious opposition to a territorial compromise. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 24 November)

357. On 22 November, the Society of St. Yves, a human rights organization, filed another petition with the High Court of Justice requesting that it suspend ground-levelling work in the area of the Atras, Wad R'hal and El Khader villages near the Efrat settlement. A week earlier, the Society had obtained an interim court order suspending work in the area until it became clear who owned the land. However, since the order referred only to one specific plot of land, settlers circumvented it by moving their bulldozers to another plot located on the southern slope of Givat Hazayit. IDF troops provided protection to the settlers and prevented Palestinian residents from approaching the site and disturbing the settlers who carried on with the work the same way as they tried to on 16 November. Land surveyors of the Society were prevented by the IDF from conducting a survey of the land. The Society expressed fears that the move was aimed at creating facts on the ground before the residents could prove their ownership. A violent confrontation on the site broke out between settlers and Palestinians on 20 November when a Palestinian family that owned three dunums of land within the boundaries of the Efrat settlement tried to build a stone fence around their plot. (Ha'aretz, 24 November)

358. On 24 November, four Palestinians petitioned the High Court of Justice to prevent settlers from Efrat from building on their land. The petitioners

claimed that when they protested against the bulldozing of their land, the army took them away to ensure that settlers could continue their work. Answering this charge, the army stated that the land was State-owned and was included in the master plan of the Efrat settlement. The petition charged, however, that the army could not prove this. It also claimed that the army had prevented the Palestinians from carrying out surveys on the land in order to prepare maps in support of their claims. (Jerusalem Post, 25 November)

359. On 26 November, the director of the Legal Department of the Centre for the Protection of the Individual, Eliyahu Abram, requested Interior Minister Eli Swissa to order the publication of the regulations and criteria guiding East Jerusalem's population registry officers in the registration of Palestinian children when only mothers were residents of the city. In a letter addressed to the Interior Minister, Mr. Abram stated that the population registry office in East Jerusalem was operating under criteria and regulations which were not known even to jurists working for human rights organizations. He charged further that the jurists had recently received official letters from the Interior Ministry according to which it had been decided to adopt a new criterion with far-reaching implications, namely that the mother or her parents had been living in Jerusalem since 1967. Mr. Abram stated that in his view, this criterion was discriminatory and illegal. (Ha'aretz, 27 November)

360. On 29 November, a Palestinian resident of Atras charged that on 28 November settlers from Efrat started to pave a road on his land. It was reported that following a second interim order issued by the High Court of Justice prohibiting settlers from encroaching on land belonging to seven families from Atras and El Hadar, settlers' bulldozers had resumed work on a third plot of land which was not included in the Court orders. Residents of the villages complained that settlers had circumvented each interim order prohibiting trespassing by moving onto another site. According to the residents, the IDF was protecting the settlers. In response to the charges, the Efrat Local Council stated that the land in question was State-owned and was included in the settlement's master plan. (Ha'aretz, 29 November)

361. On 1 December, it was reported that the residents of El Khader village were fearful of a new wave of confiscation of their agricultural land for the benefit of the Neve Daniel settlement. Dozens of residents estimated that new confiscations would involve approximately 2,000 dunums of their arable land. The Civil Administration stated that the land in question was State-owned but could not indicate its size. (Ha'aretz, 1 December)

362. On 2 December, it was reported that Mr. Netanyahu had told settlement leaders from the Jordan Valley that the Jordan Valley and Ma'aleh Efraim would remain an "integral part of Israel in any final status agreement with the Palestinians". Mr. Netanyahu announced that settlements in the region would soon receive final approval to build 470 new housing units. He assured the settlement leaders that the Government was fully committed to the development of the Jordan Valley and stated that he would examine complaints by settlers that Palestinians were "slowly encroaching on land belonging to the settlements". Mr. Netanyahu's pronouncements came only a few days after he had assured the mayor of Ariel that his settlement would remain part of Israel in any final agreement map. Commenting on Mr. Netanyahu's statements, the head of the Jordan

Valley Settlements Committee stated that it was the first time since the Prime Minister took office that he had been so unequivocal about the future of the region. He also observed that in addition to the new housing units, Mr. Netanyahu had promised some NIS 80 million over the following few years to refurbish and expand Route 90, which runs along the entire Jordan Valley. (Jerusalem Post, 2 December)

363. On 3 December, it was reported that the Israeli occupation authorities had closed down the experimental agricultural station at Fara' in the Jordan Valley earlier in the week. The personnel were evicted forcibly while settlers levelled the fields in which experiments were being conducted. The raid took place two days after Mr. Netanyahu had declared that the Jordan Valley was to remain under Israeli sovereignty in any permanent arrangement. (The Jerusalem Times, 6 December)

364. On 6 December, it was reported that the head of the Kedumim Local Council had disclosed that the construction of 700 new housing units in the settlement would begin within the next two months. This was in addition to plans for the building of an additional 1,000 units in the settlement. In an interview on Israel Radio, the head of the Council stated that part of the project was a continuation of what had been halted after the elections in 1992. He pointed out that a programme for massive building of thousands of housing units was required for settlements in the territories. (Jerusalem Post, 6 December)

365. On 6 December, a well-informed Palestinian source reported that the Israeli Government had confiscated 10,000 dunums of land in the Tulkarm governorate. The land is located in the A Teen valley and belongs to seven Palestinian villages. Israel claimed that the land in question was government land. The source added that the Israeli authorities intended to open quarries and set up stonecutters in this rocky area. Five Israeli companies have already received a licence following a 1994 decision to establish a stonecutting area in the region. In a separate development, residents of the Artas and Al-Khader villages near Bethlehem held a sit-in strike to protest against plans by the Israeli Government to expropriate 500 dunums of their land. (The Jerusalem Times, 6 December)

366. On 10 December, the IDF prevented some 30 Palestinian protesters from blocking agricultural work by settlers in an area called the "Yugoslav Experimental Farm" in the Jordan Valley. The Palestinians claimed that under the Oslo Accords the 400-dunum stretch of land belonged to them, while Israel maintained that it belonged to moshav Masua. The head of the Jordan Valley Settlements Committee termed the Palestinian protest a provocation meant to create tension in the area. He stated that the protest was an orchestrated attempt by the Palestinian Authority to "grab any piece of territory it can in the area". On 24 December, OC IDF troops in the Jordan Valley declared the farm a closed military zone for fear of further confrontations between Palestinians and settlers. (Jerusalem Post, 11 December; Ha'aretz, 25 December)

367. On 13 December, it was reported that the Israeli Government had decided to set up a new Jewish settlement in Ras-al-Amud, on the south-eastern outskirts of Jerusalem. The land on which the new settlement was to be built belongs to Palestinians, but Israeli papers claimed that it was purchased a few years ago

by a prominent Jewish businessman from the United States, Irving Moscowitz, who is close to the settlement movements. (The Jerusalem Times, 13 December)

368. On 13 December, the Committee for the Protection of Lands in Silwan and Ras-al-Amud called on residents to take part in a demonstration against the creation of a Jewish neighbourhood in Ras-al-Amud. In a related development, a spokesman for the Arab League issued a statement warning that the plans to build 132 housing units in the Ras-al-Amud neighbourhood in East Jerusalem were a time bomb that risked destroying the peace process. (Ha'aretz, 13 December)

369. On 16 December, it was reported that Defence Minister Mordechai was examining two plans for the expansion of the Beit El settlement. The head of the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza stated after a meeting with the Defence Minister that he had hoped that "words would soon be translated into deeds". He stated, however, that if the Government proceeded to expand the settlement, the Council would follow. (Ha'aretz, 16 December)

370. On 18 December, a foundation stone for a new neighbourhood on Har Artis was laid by dozens of settlers from Beit El. (Ha'aretz, 19 December)

371. On 19 December, the Israeli Government announced that it would shelve the plan to build a settlement in the Ras-al-Amud quarter in the heart of East Jerusalem. Numerous Palestinians and Israelis protested on 20 December, asking that the plan not only be shelved but cancelled. In another development, the Jerusalem municipality has given the go-ahead for the building of four Jewish houses in the centre of a park in East Jerusalem. Several Israelis had come forward claiming that they owned the plot. (The Jerusalem Times, 27 December)

372. On 20 December, more than 1,000 demonstrators gathered on the 3.5 acres in Ras-al-Amud that were slated as the venue of a Jewish housing project. Dozens of police in riot gear ringed the demonstrators who were led by Palestinian cabinet ministers and opposition Knesset members. The demonstration took place without incident. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 22 December)

373. On 20 December, it was reported that the Palestinian police force had thwarted an attempt by Israel to rebuild a military outpost west of the Netzarim settlement from which it had withdrawn 18 months before. The site overlooks the road linking Gaza City to the coast. Israel blocked Palestinian access to the coast a month ago. In a related development, Israeli Defence Minister Mordechai announced that Israel intended to begin the construction of a flyover at Netzarim to avoid contact between Palestinians and settlers. (The Jerusalem Times, 20 December)

374. On 25 December, settlers from Netzarim planted citrus fruit 700 metres away from the settlement as part of their protest against the Government's intention to open the Netzarim road to Palestinian traffic. Afterwards, they laid a foundation stone for a new neighbourhood to be called Netzarim "B". (Ha'aretz, 26 December)

375. On 26 December, it was reported that the residents of Katana village in the West Bank had complained that construction work for the expansion of the nearby

Har Adar settlement, which is located on the Green Line, was being carried out on land belonging to several families from the village. The spokesman for the Civil Administration in the West Bank responded that the ground-levelling work was being carried out on State-owned land assigned to Har Adar. Dozens of residents of villages located in areas "B" and "C" reportedly appealed on a daily basis to the various Palestinian land protection committees, complaining about the beginning of work on their lands. Reports about such operations, defined as confiscations and settlement expansion, were released by the Palestinian media on a daily basis. Israeli sources argued that no new confiscation orders had been issued and that the land in question was State-owned. (Ha'aretz, 26 December)

376. On 27 December, it was reported that Jews had purchased another house in the Christian quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. Some 1,000 Jews reportedly lived in purchased apartments in the Old City area outside the Jewish quarter. Negotiations on the purchase of other buildings by Jews were said to be under way. (Ha'aretz, 27 December)

F. Information concerning the occupied Syrian Arab Golan

377. On 26 September 1996, it was reported that National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon had instructed the Israel Land Administration to enhance the marketing of land designated for the construction of three new settlements and of 600 housing units in the Golan Heights. The construction of the settlements was expected to be completed in two years. Mr. Sharon gave instructions that the possibility be examined of reducing land prices in the region and offering prices that would encourage private construction there. The Minister's office explained that Mr. Sharon was working on the implementation of the Government's settlement policy and intended to strengthen the settlements in the Golan Heights and increase their population from 15,000 to 25,000 over the next two years. The office indicated that this goal would be achieved through the "injection" of a young population and "tempting" land prices. (Ha'aretz, 26 September)

378. On 22 October, it was reported that a senior Syrian official had warned Israel that there would be a war if Israel continued to provoke Damascus through declarations and actions confirming its sovereignty over the Golan Heights. He emphasized that Syrian troops were already deployed in defensive positions. The official indicated, however, that Syria did not wish to have a new war and was genuinely looking for a peace agreement with Israel. According to the senior official, Damascus expected that after the presidential elections in the United States of America, the President and his administration would put heavy pressure on the Israeli Government to force it to respect the undertakings made by the Labour Government concerning a withdrawal from the Golan Heights. (Jerusalem Post, 22 October)

379. On 25 October, it was reported that Mr. Netanyahu had responded positively to a request by the National Oil Company (NOC) to carry out oil exploration drillings on the Golan Heights. The NOC had reportedly invested some millions of dollars in preliminary oil drilling in the area and hoped to produce about two million barrels of oil from a new well, which would bring a $24 million

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profit at current market prices. The company's request to carry out drillings on the Golan had been shelved under the Labour Government because of the negative consequences it was expected to have on peace negotiations with Syria. (Ha'aretz, 25 October)

380. On 31 October, it was reported that the Israeli police had arrested six men from the Druze villages of Bukata and Majdal Shams on suspicion of setting fire to a police station in Mas'ada and to a building of the Income Tax Authority in Majdal Shams for nationalistic reasons some three months earlier. The six were also accused of belonging to an illegal organization. They denied all the charges against them. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 31 October)

381. On 3 November, it was reported that the Minister of Trade and Industry, Natan Sharanski, had stated that the Government should prepare the public for a war with Syria. In an interview with Ha'aretz, Mr. Sharanski stated that in light of Syrian threats, which he described as very serious, the best thing to do was to start preparing Israelis for the possibility of war. (Ha'aretz, 3 November)

382. On 19 November, it was reported that Defence Minister Mordechai had appointed a committee whose task was to study the possibility of moving the Ahmadiya fire practice area from the boundaries of the Katzrin Local Council in order to allow for the expansion of the settlement. The area, located south of the settlement, would allow for the construction of an additional 1,000 housing units in the 6,700-strong settlement, which is the largest on the Golan. The Committee, made up of senior officers, was expected to submit its conclusions to the Defence Minister within 30 days. (Ha'aretz, 19 November)

383. On 24 November, officials in the Prime Minister's office stated that the Government had not authorized the building of new settlements on the Golan Heights and indicated that any building taking place would only be part of the natural expansion of existing settlements. The Golan Residents' Committee reacted calmly to the statements, with its spokesman stating that the central calculation was not the number of settlements on the Golan Heights but the number of Jewish residents, and indicated that one big settlement such as Ma'aleh Adumim was worth more than 20 small communities. (Jerusalem Post, 25 November)

384. On 29 November, it was reported that police inquiries were continuing into a series of arson attacks and other nationalistic incidents on the Golan Heights, apparently perpetrated by pro-Syrian Druze over the past few months. The latest incident took place on 27 November when a blaze virtually gutted the dining room of a holiday village on the upper slopes of Mount Hermon. The police spokesman for the Galilee district stated that a fire brigade investigator had concluded that the fire was started deliberately. Police also found nationalistic slogans including "Down with the Occupation" and "The Golan Belongs to Syria" scrawled on walls in the building. The police spokesman noted that the incident was one of several attacks on public property in the Golan Heights over the past few months. In other incidents, saboteurs set fire to a police post in Massada village, while a blaze destroyed documents and part of a building housing the Income Tax Authority office in Majdal Shams. There had also been incidents of stone-throwing at police and civilian cars. In another

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incident, part of a restaurant owned by the head of the Buka'ata Local Council was burned in another arson blaze. Other incidents included the writing of slogans on public buildings and the raising of the Syrian flag. Police detained several suspects for questioning, all of whom were subsequently released. The incidents followed a long period of calm on the part of pro-Syrian elements on the Golan and appeared to be connected with political developments in the region. (Jerusalem Post, 29 November)

385. On 10 December, the Interior Ministry approved a NIS 250,000 investment for the creation of a civilian shooting range in the Katzrin settlement. The range was reportedly meant to serve the numerous holders of weapons, including career soldiers, civil guards, farmers and cattlemen who lived in the area. (Ha'aretz, 11 December)

386. On 11 December, it was reported that a police station that would cost NIS 4.5 million was scheduled to be built in the Katzrin settlement. The station would cover the Golan Heights and would be manned 24 hours a day. (Ha'aretz, 11 December)

387. On 13 December, a petrol bomb was thrown at an IDF command car on the Syrian border, setting the vehicle on fire. The soldiers, who were not injured, extinguished the flames. The incident occurred near the Druze village of Majdal Shams on the eve of the anniversary of the six-week strike staged by the Golan Heights Druze against the 1981 Knesset decision to extend Israeli law to the region. It followed a series of nationalistic incidents in the Golan Heights over the previous few months that were apparently perpetrated by pro-Syrian Druze. The current attack was reportedly one of the most serious ones and was being investigated by the police, the army and the security services. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 15 December)

388. On 14 December, hundreds of Golan Heights Druze took part in a parade in Majdal Shams going from the "Shouting Hill", where the Druze shout messages across the border to their relatives in Syria, to the centre of the village. A rally was later held in the village square. The demonstrations, which were authorized by the police, passed quietly, with police keeping a low profile and monitoring the events. (Jerusalem Post, 15 December)

389. On 17 December, Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin Shahak told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee that for the first time, pro-Syrian Golan Druze were attacking Druze who held Israeli identity cards or identified themselves with Israel. Shahak stated that he regarded the phenomenon as dangerous, mainly because in the past, despite internal divisions among the Druze relating to Israel, the two groups had not harmed one another. (Jerusalem Post, 18 December)

390. On 20 December, a fire bomb was thrown at IDF soldiers driving through the Druze village of Majdal Shams. The fire bomb narrowly missed the jeep but damaged a car parked nearby. Large numbers of police forces and IDF troops were sent to the area, and extensive investigations were conducted in Majdal Shams and the neighbouring Druze villages. Three persons were arrested. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 22 December)

391. On 23 December, it was reported that the Housing Ministry was about to put out tenders for the marketing of land for the construction of 96 housing units in the Katzrin settlement. (Ha'aretz, 23 December)
